

THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE

EDITED BY
LEONARD HUXLEY



APRIL 1930.

PAGE

POLYCHROMATA : X.—DAYBREAK .. .	<i>By J. Leslie Mitchell</i>	385
THE REHABILITATION OF SOAMES FORSYTHE		
	<i>By Henry Charles Duffin</i>	397
CANTON : THE LAND AND WATER CITY	<i>By Colonel P. T. Etherton</i>	407
THE GREY TASSEL TREE : A SHORT STORY	<i>By W. M. Letts</i>	415
BROWNING'S ANSWER .. .	<i>By Rowland Grey</i>	423
To M.S. : ON HER COMING SOUTH IN WINTER—VERSE		
	<i>By Sir George Leveson Gower, K.B.E.</i>	430
HAPPY ENDING ? A SHORT STORY .. .	<i>By Naomi Mitchison</i>	431
RADIAUM—UNTAPPED EMPIRE SOURCES.	<i>By Robert M. Macdonald</i>	444
THE SECRET OF THE ICE : A SHORT STORY	<i>By Claude E. Benson</i>	462
NEW LAMPS FOR OLD .. .	<i>By Ida Finlay</i>	476
THE CONFESSOR : A SHORT STORY .. .	<i>By Alice Galimberti</i>	483
THE WINGS OF WAR : II.—THE DAWN PATROL		
	<i>By D. P. Capper</i>	488
CARDINAL WOLSEY .. .	<i>By Sir John Marriott</i>	498
LITERARY ACROSTIC, No. 80 .. .		511

NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENTS

Communications to the Editor should be addressed to the care of JOHN MURRAY,
50 Albemarle Street, W.1.

All Contributions are attentively considered, and unaccepted MSS. are returned
when accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope; but
the Editor cannot hold himself responsible for any
accidental loss. MSS. cannot be delivered on
personal application. Articles of a political
nature are not accepted. Every Contribu-
tion should be typewritten on one
side of each leaf only, and should
bear the Name and Address
of the Sender; a prelimin-
ary letter is not desired.



LONDON
JOHN MURRAY
50 Albemarle St., W.1.



Published Monthly, price 1s. 6d. net. Annual Subscription, 20s. post free.

Entered as Second Class Matter March 15, 1929, at the Post Office, Boston, Mass., U.S.A.,
under the Act of March 3, 1879 (Sec. 397, P.L. and R.)

All Rights Reserved.

ROYAL EXCHANGE ASSURANCE



Incorporated A.D. 1720.

All classes of Insurance transacted
and the duties of Executor and
Trustee undertaken.

*For more than 200 years the
address of the Head Office
of the Corporation has been*

THE ROYAL EXCHANGE · LONDON

THE LADY OF THE CROMLECH

An Irish novel by

HUGH DE BLACAM

This is a tale for lovers of the open road, of wine,
laughter and song, of sport and adventure, and especially
for those who know, or mean to know, the hills, moors
and rivers of Ireland, a land wherein these good things
abound.

7s. 6d. net.

JOHN MURRAY : Albemarle Street : LONDON, W.1

THE
CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

APRIL 1930.

POLYCHROMATA.

BY J. LESLIE MITCHELL.

X. *DAYBREAK.*

I.

THE little cluster of bell-flowers—From Scotland? But it has travelled far! I may smell it? . . . God mine, it is heather!

It cloaks your mountains in purple this time of year, does it not? Never have I seen it before; but I have smelt this smell. I have smelt it blowing on a wind from those mountains I have never trod, a breath of that autumn I have never known. . . .

Eh? In imagination? But no, in the reality—I, Anton Saloney, here in our Cairo, almost the year ago to-day.

II.

And the tale begins, if I must tell it, neither here in Egypt nor in that Kazan where I was Professor of the English Literature before I became White soldier, refugee, and dragoman. It begins in the far Scotland that sent you the heather, with Roger Mantell on the autumn walking-tour up through your Urals.

He was the young journalist in London, this Roger, and very poor, as is proper for the journalist. Something of your own height and appearance he had, with that brownness of the hair and eyes that indistinguishes the Englishman, and a certain far-awayness of outlook that made of him the not too-good journalist. History was his passion, and he had taken the walking-tour to plan the writing of a book. This book was to refute the foolish Spengler—him who believes all history goes in cycles, like the mad dog chasing its tail.

And one night-time, very late, passing through a village amongst those hills, he heard a girl singing a peasant song—so sweet and strange and beautiful in the dark that he halted and listened. And the song was this:

'Oh, the memory an' the ache
They have stown the heart fra me,
And there's heather on the hills
In my ain countree.'

All next day, though many miles away, he found memory of singer and song haunting him. So pressing was it that he turned about and went back to lay this ghostly thing. Outside the village school he heard the voice again.

Then, in the growing amazement at himself, he rented a room at the village inn, in three days obtained introduction to his singer, and within the week, though his history had not progressed even in the draft beyond so-hairy Eoanthropus, was planning nothing of greater import than to steal the singer from her hills.

Her father had been the village schoolmaster and she was teacher of the school. And because he had been a poet this dead father of hers had called her Dawn. To watch her stand against the sunrise, as many a morning she did when they tramped the hills together and the mists were rising, caught the amazement ever again in the throat of Roger. Slight and slim and dark and quick, this singer of the hills, with clear eyes, grey and grave, but with the little twinkle-light deep down in them. She had the pale, clear skin with the faint blood-flush. She detested the poor Spengler and could run like a deer.

Indeed, though one who had lived in the hills all her life, she was of the most modern—one of that woman's miracle-generation that knows nothing of the reserves and hesitations and tantalisations. She had the body of a gracious boy and the mind of an eager Greek.

If Roger first loved her for her voice, I think she loved him at first sight, protectingly, because of that far-awayness of his look. Under painted skies, children in a world transformed, they walked that autumn. Roger had been the unawakened tourist, but Dawn took him out into mornings of wonder when, in the silence, he would hear the sun come audibly up from the east, hear the earth stir and move as from its sleep. Or into fervid noons, to lie on a mountain-side and listen to the drowsy under-song of bees rising and falling on the never-coming wind. And the brown night would creep over this land of Dawn's as one very ancient who went home from toil. . . .

It seemed to him that she had deeper kinship with those things than he would ever fathom. 'I don't believe you are human at all,' he said to her once. 'You're out of the hills and the sunrise.'

She laughed at him, and then was grave, in that fashion that

somehow had power to wring his heart absurdly. ‘I never remember my mother. She died when I was born. And my father was always lost in his books. I carried all my desperate wrongs and fears to the hills.’ She sat with cheek in hand and looked across the sun-hazed valleys. ‘I think they love me, those hills, almost as much as I love them.’

‘How can they help it?’ said Roger, her lover.

III.

In the little time they were deciding when they would marry and how many children they would have, and whether it would be better to wait until Roger made the thousand a year or only the eight hundred. Not till there was security and certainty were they to mate. . . . At the least, that was Roger’s planning, and Dawn, this so-amazing Greek boy who was more than the boy, sat and looked at him and her hills, I think perhaps with the twinkletapers lighting her grey eyes.

For he had come in the first months of the autumn. Day by day it deepened around them. Purple grew the mountains and under the long heats of day climbed to heaven in a shimmering blaze. Out of the earth rose all the songs of fruition and ending, and that second week there was a moon that came and never seemed to set. They could not keep their beds, these two, but stole out to meet each other in the white radiant wonder.

Till one night—this but the guess-work of mine—they kissed each other and in their kiss was already a wild regret. The hours are on wings, on wings! beat the shadows that were night-birds. Now, now! beat their own hearts. . . . Perhaps Dawn held him at arm’s length, and laughed at him with the little breathlessness. ‘But, Roger! . . . A thousand a year!’

And then, whatever his answer, in some such hour of the earth-magic they came to their decision.

One night, under a moon that trembled on the wane, but waited for them still, they climbed together up into the hills and the radiance and not a bird that called in the shadows but was their friend, and there was none of the need to say good-night.

IV.

But no moons endure forever, and presently Dawn was with Roger in a little flat in London and those days on the hills dimmed till they were of a dream.

I have never seen your London or known its life, but it seems they went to live there in the season of the fogs which rise from a blind little river amidst the streets. They began their life in a half-twilight, with the million under-murmurs of other life a still roar about them. In the morning Roger was gone to the office of his gazette ; often he did not return until midnight. For many weeks they would see each other only at night-time, each wearied and a little tired. . . .

And in the little was the amazement, I think, and silent tears shed in the darkness that love could ever tarnish so. For they came to look on each other searchingly, even on the wild occasion angrily—Dawn to see her dreamer of the hills visionary and unpractical, immersed in his book and the refutations of cyclic catastrophe, irritable over the refractory phrase or the inadequate reference. And to Roger it sometimes seemed that he was tied, by all unreasonable bonds, to a boy quickly bored and swift to anger, one whose eyes could light with other than mirth, one whose laughter could ring cruel and very clear. . . .

But these are of the things inevitable ? They are not the less heart-breaking. Sometime, both knew, they would come to the adjustments and live with lesser friction. They would, in their English phrase, ‘settle down.’ But the ache in the dark of love, a thing so-shining, to look forward to the settle-down !

Yet was that never to be, for a day came when they looked at each other in disbelief and the settle-down fled out into the blinded streets and romance rang her bugles for them again. The great secret was theirs, theirs partnership in the abiding mystery. . . .

But who am I to speak of it or understand ? We of the unmarried are emotionally unborn, even though, wistfully, we catch a glimpse of understanding. This child of theirs was to be—oh, that hero that every child may be !—a captain of the hosts of the morning, Dawn and Roger in one, doer and dreamer, one who was to confound all erring Germans and bear the torch of vision yet another league up the Defile through which march the hosts that have climbed from the beast.

And they named him, and dreamt of him and hoped for him, and the months fell away, into spring warming London, into the summer, till there came the day when Dawn must pass through her hours of agony and Roger doubt his vision of history. For there arose the complications and the bringing of a surgeon. . . .

In the end was the child born dead, and for the little it seemed that Dawn herself would die.

V.

But she lived, returning to life wan and a stranger from a desolate land. She must bear no more children, nor must she stay the winter in England, the doctors said.

Roger—a Roger grown practical at the last—took her north to the brief summer-autumn of her hills. So soon as he could leave her he went back to London again. In a week he was sending her the news that he had found a gazette willing to send him abroad for a year, to Egypt, to act as the correspondent and write a series-impressions of Cairo and the Nile-country.

VI.

So they came to our Polychromata, those two. On the voyage Dawn grew again the Greek boy, and her laughter came back, and the little twinkle that changed and yet abided in her grey eyes. They came from the ship at Alexandria and found a *pension* at Kubbah. From there they set to the search for a house.

At the length, up on Nile bank to the north of Gezireh Island, they came one afternoon on that at sight of which Dawn cried ‘Oh Roger!’ in the tone that stirred in him always a memoried cry from a day of agony. They stopped and looked at the desired possession, and laughed eagerly, and kissed like the children they were.

For that was the supreme wonder of their days—their love that had flamed anew. As never before it flamed. But the burning is the wrong simile. It burgeoned and blossomed, strange and sweet, not the love of the first early days nor yet the compassionate passion of the dark London time. It was something that made of their first wild desire a childish greed, of the settle-down necessity a humour and a fantasy. . . .

They surveyed the empty house by Nile bank and went back to Kubbah in the apprehension that it would be gone by morning. But the next day they found the agent, rented ‘*La maison Saniosu*,’ and engaged two Egyptian servants. It jutted out upon the Nile, the house, old and of crumbling stone, mantled with a brown creeper that reached down its tendrils to the water. It was two storeys in height and had a high-walled garden also skirted by the Nile.

They had taken it furnished, so after a few necessary purchases in the bazaars, and in the intervals of Roger writing the so-masterly series-impressions, they had but to debate a new name for it.

Above the door was its name carved—*Maison Saniosu*.

'Let's call it *Sans-Sous* and be done,' said Roger. And this, because they were very young and very poor and very happy, was a great jest, and almost on that name they decided.

But one morning—a morning early in October—happened that which solved the so-urgent matter. In their room Dawn was the first to awake. Upon the window was the urgent tapping of a twig and she looked out on the wonder of a Nile daybreak. Presently she awakened Roger and they sat side by side watching in the sky the silver that changed to amber and so to copper and then into the blind flush of azure.

They had been awakened by the first of the seasonal morning winds that brings the end of the khamsin time, but that they did not know until later. Only that unexpected wind had brought to Dawn an inspiration.

'I know—name for our house! Was there ever such suitable name!'

Roger stared at her. 'What?'

'Why, Daybreak.'

He made the teasing of her. 'But that is your own name. It is Dawn.' Then he laughed, and there were words in your English Bible that he remembered, very wonderful and beautiful words:

'"Until the day break and the shadows flee away—"'

VII.

I met them first in the mid-November, in front of the Sphinx, when Dawn was posing it and her Roger and an Egyptian dragoman for the photograph. I also had come to photograph it for a client I had.

Roger apologised for his Philistine wife who insisted that he and the dragoman should stand beside the Riddle of the Sands. I made her the bow.

'I think she is wise,' I said, 'for this is no Riddle, but only a foolish vanity in stone. If I might I would have madame in my photograph with the Sphinx.'

I have that photograph still, with the little madame, slight and sweet and brave, standing beside that owlish carving of the foolish dead. Then I helped them catch the donkeys which had

strayed and we went to Mena House and drank the much-needed tea, for the donkey-catching had been a task of the mirth and great speed.

From the first I think their liking was for me as mine for them. Presently, when we had ceased to laugh at memory of a donkey which had raced Roger for almost a mile, they were telling me of the house called Daybreak and that sudden wind from the Nile that now tapped their window each morning.

'It is a *green* wind,' said the little madame, and paused in the doubt of my understanding.

'I know,' I said. 'It is of the Delta crops and harvesting. Yet few know it for a green wind.'

'I am a peasant myself,' she said. 'Is that why?'

I looked at her and wove the fantasy. 'You are of the most ancient race, I think. Of the brunet race that held the Mediterranean lands long before there was Celt or Saxon or Slav. They are not of the history-books: they passed north and south into bleaker lands before history opened. But perhaps there was one of them, some far-father of yours, who once tilled the Delta lands and woke to that green wind. Perhaps it is a memory that has come to you across ten thousand years.'

'That is a wonderful thought,' said Dawn, and looked at her Roger.

'I will steal it for an article,' said Roger, and there was the laughter amongst us.

VIII.

In the little I was a frequent visitor at the house called Daybreak. I talked of the Nile and the little Cairo and gave to Roger good copy for his London gazette. Soon to both of them I was the close friend, and knew this tale of theirs I have told you, even as they knew mine. When I told Roger of those Four Years which ended for me in the storming of Perekop by the Sovyet heroes—heroes they were, though my enemies—I remember the long silence that fell.

'That is life,' he said. 'And it seems blind chance and aimlessness. . . . But there's something behind it greater than a dark malignancy. Though that malignancy is real enough. Perhaps in ancient Egypt they saw it, the Dark Shadow, and built the Sphinx and Pyramids to ward it off.'

'And this other thing,' I said. 'What is it?'

'Oh, something equally nameless and untheological. It has led us up through the dark Defile of history, has turned in many guises to help again and again the stragglers and the lost in their hour of utmost despair. It will lead us to the sunrise yet.'

'That Daybreak the poor Spenglers have never visioned,' I jested at him, though I loved his faith. We heard the singing of Dawn inside the house. 'And the little madame is its prophet.'

He laughed and was a poet. 'She was made in secret when the Dark Gods slept!'

Never since Kazan had I known such friendship as those nights when the little madame and I would sit and talk under our Cairene moon, with the bulking of Bulaq beyond the garden wall and the far wail of native song in our ears. Sometimes was Roger with us, but often indoors, working on the so-great book that was not in the contract with his London gazette—the book that was to bring him reputation and money. I brought the violin to that garden, and Dawn would sing for me peasants' songs that left me homesick for my Volga lands—though they were songs of that Scotland I have never seen. Once she sang that verse which had halted Roger in the hills, and I have forgotten it never:

'Oh, the memory an' the ache
They have stown the heart fra me,
And there's heather on the hills
In my ain countree.'

But of course I loved her. From the first moment I think I loved her. And with Roger also I was in love. They were to me the surety of my dreams. I loved them as one loves those dream-children, keen and beautiful, who will people our happy world a thousand years after we are dead.

IX.

And then, in the February, there came the horror into their lives.

At the first I did not understand their silences and strangeness. I said to myself that I was the too-frequent visitor—what need had these lovers of such alien as myself? For a little there was the bitterness with me, and I stayed away from the house called Daybreak, going there not at all until the passing of two weeks.

When next I went it was to endure their reproach and in the eyes of the little madame a hurt puzzlement.

' You have tired of us ? Why have you stayed away ? '

I kissed her hand. ' But I had thought you tired of me,' I said, and blundered over words which I desired not to say. ' There seemed the difference the last time I came. . . . '

Then was there the silence, though Roger broke it with a sudden laugh and talk of indifferent matter. His eyes were the eyes of a sick animal. And when presently we were alone he went to the window, and looked blindly out on the sunlight and the Nile, then turned and told me.

And then, God mine ! I also knew the sudden sickness of mind, and had no word to say because of the horror of the thing.

For another child was coming, and, as they had been told, Dawn could never live through such a thing again.

X.

I proposed the committee of doctors which may deal with such cases, but Dawn, modern of moderns though she was, would have none of it. For she could talk of these things, being my friend and of her miracle-generation.

' I think—oh, I don't know, but it would be cheating.'

' But this is the absurd fatalism,' I pleaded, as Roger also had pleaded. The little twinkle set its lights in her grave eyes.

' Anton, my dear, was it absurd fatalism that led you to fight a hopeless fight in your White army ? . . . And have you lost—even yet ? '

That was in the garden of Daybreak, in the late March, and we were silent as she leant on the wall and looked down on the hastening waters. She had a sudden idle thought.

' Oh, that morning wind from the Delta—it does not blow now.'

' Eh ? ' I said. ' The wind ? It will not come again for many months.'

XI.

I procured for them Dr. Adrian, the English gynaecologist, who is my friend. Dawn liked him, for he is the droll, but to Roger he talked with a grave face, for he had from London the particulars of the case when the other child had died. The little madame must know no unhappiness or worry. Also, she must leave Cairo.

For the summer months drew on. They blazed their strong

heat that summer as never before, I think. Yet Dawn, even when Roger at this would have written to his London gazette and made the resignation, refused. They would stay on at Daybreak. On the little madame was the Cairene spell—that spell which makes of a chance house and garden in this strange city more homely than home.

But never so long a summer. . . . A tent was set in the garden, and through those long days of white warmth we watched Dawn with the stealthiness of criminals who fear their gaze may be detected. So she told us, laughing, but with the wistfulness. I doubt if Roger comforted her; it was she who gave the comfort. For him it was to start out of even the happiest moment into the blank silence when terror walked his brain and looked from his eyes. And from that would he be awakened with her arms about him, and her teasing tenderness. . . . Then I would stride away, with the sick fear upon me also.

God mine, it was pitiful, heart-breaking.

But I set out to be the droll, even as did Adrian—he who has said that no gynaecologist can be anything but gynaecolatrist—in his visits to the house called Daybreak. We sought to weave the conspiracy, we three—the conspiracy to keep afar the malignant shadow of which Roger had talked. Presently the Egyptian servants also understood and were in that conspiracy. With the ending of the khamsin-time I organised many of the late afternoon excursions—to the Barrage, to Heliopolis, to the desert, borrowing a car from Adrian to take them to those places.

One afternoon in late September I took them to Abu Zabal. For mile on mile we went into that brown country, where stand in sleep the white-washed villages under their smoke-pencilings, and there is no other colour at all, but only the white and black. We had tea as a picnic, making it under the lee of a ruined dyke in the sunset. It was such sunset as seemed to fire the world.

'It is the Ragnarok,' I said, and Dawn poured sand on Roger, who was lazy and lay flatwise, to make him sit up and look at it.

'I've seen a Grampians sunset like that,' he said.

The little madame caught her breath. She began to speak in a whisper.

'It's autumn there now. Oh, my hills, my dear hills! Can't you see them and smell them, Roger, climbing purple into the sunset? And hear the curlews crying down the glen?'

We said nothing, and then we saw that she was weeping—desolately, with uncovered face, she who had been so brave.

And the time drew ever nearer like a black wall of sand.

XII.

There came a night when Roger Mantell and I tramped that garden through hours that seemed never-ending. The cruel aloofness of the yellow stars and the whispering Nile! And it seemed to me then, as I think to Roger himself, that the dream of his history was false, that alone and unfriended man wandered amidst the cold immensities of space and time. . . . Beside and above us, against the southwards sky, were the lights of the house called Daybreak.

To and fro, hour on hour, I walked Roger, and talked to him of the stars. I remember I stood pointing out to him Alpha in Centaur when Lesdiguières, the French colleague of Adrian, called him from the garden-door.

For Adrian was not there. That night of all nights he was in Alexandria, and, though we had sent the telegram for him, would not be back until the morning. Lesdiguières, good and careful, but of the old school and the old fashion—it seemed but a moment when I next heard him calling me. But it must have been longer, for in the east were the ghost-limnings of the day.

'The child—born alive, yes. A boy, and of the complications none. But the girl'—and I knew he meant the little madame—'is exhausted. She will not see the day, I think. She is calling for you.'

I shall not tell you, my friend, of that so-close room—the windows Lesdiguières had closed against the night miasmas—nor the smells of the antiseptics, nor the stout French nurse who was presently gone out of the room with the doctor. I knelt and kissed the hand of the little madame—so-tired, a child herself, lying there, Roger's arm under her head. She was sinking very quickly, dying of exhaustion. But as I rose to go she whispered 'Stay.'

I looked at Roger, but for me he had no eyes. I turned to the closed window and saw in the sky a pallor that waned and flushed and spread. And there came in my mind then, into that silence a bitter memory—the words Roger had quoted the day they named their house.

'Until the day break and the shadows flee away—'

Suddenly there was the rustling sound and I looked round. The little madame had sat urgently up in the arms of her lover, her eyes shining.

‘ Roger, Roger, look—the hills ! ’

And then upon the window I heard a little tapping. I wheeled to it and saw the urgent twig beating upon the pane. It was the first of the Delta winds. Of sudden impulse I undid the catch and flung the window open to the Nile daybreak. . . .

And then I heard from Roger the little cry of wonder.

For suddenly, borne on that first Nile wind, out of the dawn the room was flooded with a nameless scent, and it seemed to me a moment I stood in a great valley, and up the grey slopes climbed the dawn, and as it climbed those hill-slopes mantled a misting purple.

. . . A moment the thing was, in a strange, sweet silence, and then gone. I turned and looked at Roger’s white face.

‘ My God ! ’ he whispered. ‘ Did you smell it ? *It was heather !* ’

We looked at the little madame lying silent in his arms. I thought her dead, and then, while we stared, we saw she was asleep.

XIII.

And she lived, coming out of that health-giving sleep with no memory of the morning happenings. In the spring Roger took her and his son away from Cairo and Egypt, back to her hills, for he was by then the great man because of his book. And me she kissed farewell—me, the dragoman ! —and there was a mist in her clear eyes. . . .

But Adrian when he came that morning : ‘ You saved her life,’ he said to me, while we three stood in the garden and the little Dawn slept in the room above the Nile. ‘ It was the Delta morning wind that did it—the change in the temperature, you know. That fool Lesdiguières must have half-suffocated her.’

Yet until prevail the years that make all things dim will it seem to Roger and me that once, in an hour of desperate need, we were granted glimpse of the kindlier, nameless thing that verily shines and abides behind all the blind ways and destinies of Nature.

THE REHABILITATION OF SOAMES FORSYTE.

BY HENRY CHARLES DUFFIN.

WHEN *Swan Song* was published everybody went about exclaiming, ‘What a perfectly splendid old fellow Soames had become before his death !’ Sharing the impression, one sought to justify it : to account for a change that amounted almost to a transfiguration. Certain obvious explanations offered themselves—the mellowing effect of time, the substitution of Fleur for Irene as an emotional stimulant. One’s own suggestion was that the increased stature was perhaps only apparent, merely relative : a lone Victorian, he dwarfed the scurrying Lilliputians of the post-war epoch, though he had cut no special figure among his contemporaries. This view assumed a different, and dangerous, aspect in the minds of some who asked, ‘After all, was he ever very bad ?’

Soames has doubtless earned the right to have his long-past sins forgotten, and in ‘life’ he would pretty certainly have lived them down. But though to exist in fiction may confer immortality, it immortalises one’s sins too ; and the matter-of-fact reader, having paid tribute to Soames’s later days, turns ruthlessly back to the *Saga* and finds there Soames not only repellent but deliberately made so by his creator. The characteristic chosen for his introduction is the ‘habitual sniff’ on his face. He hates sunshine, but likes being called a gentleman, though he haggles interminably over the expenditure of money. In church his face has a chalky look. His hair is sleek, his cheeks are pale and flat, his eyes cold and strained-looking ; his cut-away coat is buttoned strictly, his hand-shake is chilly and limp. His absurd incompatibility with the beautiful wife he has married is emphasised. Music, the very wings of Irene’s soul, bores Soames. He has a mincing, mousing step, and takes regular baths because it is ‘the thing,’ while Irene invokes the simile of a water-nymph. Their relations are appalling ; his harsh bullying attitude towards her, incredible in view of the reality and depth of his feeling, is explicable only in the light of the ‘property’ sense that taints his life : he is in a constant state of exasperation at the incompleteness of his ‘ownership.’ This slave-relation, which forms the title-page text of *The Man of*

Property, culminates in Soames's brutal violation of his wife ; he broods over his achievement with dubious pride, while the sound of her sobbing haunts him. And we know that before she had consented to marry him he had sworn over and over again that if the marriage was unsuccessful she should be free. Oh, there can be no question about the depths from which Soames has to rise. Galsworthy rubs him in.

But before considering Soames further some attention must be given to Irene. For his rehabilitation is involved with, and partly proceeds from, her failure. A distressing result of re-reading the whole of the *Forsyte Chronicles* is that one comes to understand, though not to agree with, the description of Irene by a well-known woman writer as 'one of the unpleasantest women in fiction.' It is not, of course, and on the whole, in relation to Soames that her failure is apparent. If there is anyone who can approve of Soames's exercise of his 'authority,' and blame Irene for her aversion, in *The Man of Property*, such approval and such blame must cease when Soames, in the following book, employs a private detective agency to shadow his wife, and makes himself both base and ridiculous in doing so. But whereas in relation to nearly everyone else but Irene Soames is admirable, it is in certain other critical relations that Irene comes out rather badly. The progress of the love between Irene and Bosinney reads too much like a common intrigue : Irene should have been given a finer lover. The airy and complete way in which both Irene and Bosinney ignore June's rights and feelings would be amusing if it were not abominable. Galsworthy's answer to this censure is to be found in his frequent use of the word 'lawless' in connection with Irene's beauty. He seems to intend the word as a compliment. But surely law is a good thing, not a bad thing ; so that lawlessness is bad, not good. Old Jolyon saw this very early, and called the spell she cast over men dangerous. To young Jolyon she is the spirit of universal beauty—certainly not a lawless thing. Jolyon is unconventional himself : he ran from his first wife with an Austrian governess, and unites with Irene months before their marriage ; but he expounds to Jon the great law of consideration for other people. When Soames demands that Irene should either return to him or give him evidence for a divorce, she proposes, as she has not had a lover, to take one : it is June who cries 'how horrible,' and Jolyon who says, 'out of the question, *sans amour*.' Indeed, at one point, when Irene comes back from a visit to Bosinney

flushed, perfumed, breathless, in 'a soft, shapeless, rose-coloured blouse,' one is inclined to think Galsworthy is rubbing Irene in too!—emphasising to the point of caricature this amorous, unrestrained, 'lawless' quality.

All this, however, in no way makes Soames's conduct more defensible, though by taking the fine edge off our sympathy with Irene it may induce a little illegitimate sympathy for Soames. But in a later episode, the affair of Jon and Fleur, not only is Irene's action more plainly culpable, but Soames's line is so right and decent in itself that he gets a double accretion of admiration.

The episode occurs at a time when Soames has largely and Irene completely escaped from the unpleasant associations of *The Man of Property*. Galsworthy has accomplished this for Irene by passing her through the miraculous *Indian Summer of a Forsyte*. Here for the first time, she is found in close contact with that vein of gold that runs through the coarser Forsyte metal—the Jolyon strain, with which she is to be associated from now to the end of the Chronicles. It is a different world from that of *The Man of Property*, and Irene is a lovelier figure in it. Jolyon is very old, almost an abstraction of the undying dream of beauty, and in that sunset radiance Irene is born again. She is of the sort to take colour from her surroundings. Her relations with Soames, with Bosinney, with June had been sordid; but now there is only a very old man and a little child, and her beauty expands like a flower. So she is made ready for the second of the line. One feels that young Jolyon was too sane, too tolerant, too humorous to be a proper mate for Irene, but their friendship and love are always charming and gracious.

For Soames the process of renewal has been less kindly as well as more gradual. The events which brought *The Man of Property* to a close plunged Soames into a furnace of affliction such as no man could pass through without his creator's feelings towards him being changed. When he emerges, twelve years later, at the beginning of *In Chancery*, it is at once apparent that Galsworthy's 'down' on him has gone. Descriptions of his personal appearance are no longer caustic: he is allowed to look his best, and to be 'not ill-looking.' His unlucky sense of property takes on the more respectable guise of an innate sense of law and order—a counter-balance to 'lawlessness,' rather than a cage for it. For his determination to 'own' a wife has been substituted a desire for a son, the pathos of which is greatly heightened by the emphasis

laid on the very deep and true relation that exists between Soames and his now ageing father. He shows signs of being sensitive to natural beauty. He dislikes Brighton because it is devoid of the scent of sweet peas.

Certainly there is the incident of the birth of his child, when he is put into the shocking dilemma of having to choose between losing wife and losing child, and he makes the wrong choice, and yet both are saved, but the long-desired son turns out a girl. One shakes one's head over the choice, but knows that only a sentimentalist would have chosen otherwise. Just so rightly chose Bacon when he had either to obey the Queen or stand by his friend.

This is undoubtedly a more 'sympathetic' Soames, but the Irene complex still works in him for evil. When he thinks of her he 'snarls.' Yet he pesters her to return—to give him a son. He thrusts himself upon her till she is forced to say, 'I would rather die.' He drives her to say, 'I hate you.' For the second time he commits an unforgivable sin, setting the filthy Polteed business on foot. One comes to suppose at last that even in this he is blameless: he simply lacks a sense—the sense of chivalry and decency. But the tragic harm is done all the same, and Irene is spoilt for ever. He has driven her to hate him. Aversion—a matter of the nerves—has become hatred, which poisons the blood and touches the mind. When the Jon-Fleur problem presents itself, Irene is not quite sane. It is her only excuse.

More harm is done by the interference of parents in the love-affairs of their children than by any other form of human muddling whatsoever. This well-established generalisation is, however, not needed to prove the criminality of frustrating the love that was begun in the orchard and in the 'idyll on grass.' Of course, the elders in the book are not spectators at these two scenes, but we who are privileged can only exclaim at the wickedness of middle-aged people who make such exquisite children carry on their middle-aged feuds. And the dreadful thing is that throughout it is Irene who insists. She, so passive, so pliant, is strong alone in this. She is strong first that the truth about the 'feud' shall not be told to Jon, though Jolyon's common-sense argues differently. She says, 'It will seem to Jon a crime that his mother once married without love.' This is queer logic, for her conclusion is that Jon shall be condemned to run the risk of having to marry without love. June, who is also of the splendid Jolyon stock, sees things clearly enough: when Jolyon (who—sinking that tolerance which had

once made him say, 'I never stop anyone from doing anything'—identifies himself amazingly with his wife) says that the inarguable factor in the situation is human feeling, thinking of Irene, June retorts, 'Of course it is—the human feeling of these young things.' Irene seems quite unaware of this point of view. She misses a golden opportunity of coming to see it by keeping off the subject during the six weeks she spent with her son in Spain.

Jon is magnificently firm under pressure, so the cruel letter is written. Jolyon states the facts admirably, and Galsworthy maintains that it is the facts that determine Jon. But Jolyon does not leave the facts to speak: he follows them with a long terrible page of interpretation and passionate pleading. Feeling what a sickening blow the boy is about to be dealt, one is startled at the casualness of Irene's comment when she reads the letter: 'It's wonderfully put. I don't see how it could be put better. Thank you, dear'—as if Jolyon had written a note for her complaining that the washing had been sent home wrong. And even then, even when his father has died to stab home the letter, even then Jon is clear in his wish to marry Fleur. There is an appalling scene in Jon's room at night, when his mother asks him, 'Do you think you could possibly be happy with this girl?' Is it possible that Galsworthy does not feel, or, feeling, does not detest, the hard, sour parental tone of that question? It sounds sharply again a little later.

'Irene got up.

"I told you that night, dear, not to mind me. . . . I can stand what's left—I've brought it on myself."

Her reiterated 'Don't think of me!' to which Galsworthy draws our attention, is pure hypocrisy in view of the way in which she keeps her feelings constantly and poignantly before him.

Irene's failure—for which, we must not forget, Soames's persecution is ultimately responsible—provides a foil against which Soames now shines very brightly. He is faced by the identical problem. He hates the idea of this marriage: not so violently as Irene does, and for less cogent reasons, but strongly enough, and for the very good reason that he believes he has been most bitterly wronged by Irene and Jolyon. But Soames loves Fleur unselfishly. One doubts if Irene, who cannot forget herself, loves anyone at all like that. So he sinks his feelings, and goes to plead the cause of his daughter's happiness. With what result we know: Irene has made only one result possible. Soames returns to Fleur, to be met with the blind

cruelty of her grief—‘ Father, you betrayed me ! . . . Oh, what did you—what could you have done in those old days ? ’ But he quickly forgets the pain of this wound in thought for his daughter’s grief. ‘ If he could make her happy again, he didn’t care.’ No wonder the reader grows oblivious of the Soames of *The Man of Property*.

The condemnation that has been offered of Irene’s conduct in the Jon-Fleur business must take account of her double motive in so pitilessly thwarting the proposed marriage. Besides the objection, based on pure egotism, to the thought of her son’s marrying a daughter of Soames, there is the objection, more speciously conceived in the interests of Jon himself, to Fleur’s character. This is the line that meddling parents have taken since the world began : it is highly presumptuous, and generally not to be encouraged even by asking whether the objections are founded in fact or not. In this particular case, however, it is worth while looking a little into the character of the girl who was declared to be so shockingly unfit as a mate for Jon.

The only charge that is actually put into words is that Fleur has ‘ rather a having nature.’ It is Holly who utters this warning to Jon, but it is pleasing to discover afterwards that the objection was not so much Holly’s as Val’s. Irene makes the same point : ‘ You are a giver, Jon ; she is a taker.’ One may be pardoned for suggesting that this is no bad combination. Two takers will quarrel ; two givers will make each other sick. But—a giver and a taker—both are happy ! In any case, it is an absurdly slender ground on which to decree the sundering of a passionate love. We must note, however, that in this apparently mild censure there lies implicit the whole of Fleur’s catastrophic behaviour in *Swan Song*. This does not exonerate those who bring the charge, for they are not gifted with the power of seeing into the future ; but it explains why Galsworthy, who *did* know what was going to happen in the later books, allowed Irene and Holly to bring the charge as if it were already as weighty as it afterwards became. As for the aforesaid catastrophic behaviour, the unlovely hunting of Jon that forms the tragic chord of *Swan Song*—though Jon was not blameless, there is little to be said for Fleur. What she did was not only mad and bad, it was stupid. She ought to have seen—she did see—that there was no possibility of getting the whole of Jon’s love and loyalty now, and that to tear in two his love and loyalty could produce nothing but misery. But there is this to

be said—that blame for the whole dreary episode is to no small extent to be laid at the doors of those who first separated these ‘star-crossed’ lovers. Whatever they may have been right in, they were obviously wrong in assuming that the love of Jon and Fleur was a shallow-rooted boy and girl affair. After four years of not unhappy marriage, and before there is any hint that Jon will ever appear again, Fleur is contemptuously comparing her new loves with that old one: ‘She could have loved—she *had* loved! Wilfrid and Michael—they might go to the deuce!’ And though Jon loves his wife, he has been in England but a few hours when Anne and Fleur get confused in the corridors of his dreams.

Fleur’s seduction of Jon, though partly a product of the unnatural situation in which she is placed through the fault of others, is unequivocally bad. For the rest of her, she is a mixture, rich in interest. Her considerable powers of deception and her lack of scruple were shown early. These qualities take on a darker appearance in the affair of Wilfrid Desert; and yet Fleur, in view of her period and her circumstances, is almost incredibly good in the later stages of this affair. She appears to be absorbed in the fatuities of ‘society,’ but there are signs that she despises what she feels she is bound to do so thoroughly, and in any case she is one with her class, a class that is drawn as wholly lacking in culture: on the only two occasions on which it is recorded that Michael Mont, a Member of Parliament, took his wife to the theatre, the pieces they chose were entitled respectively ‘Great Itch’ and ‘Dat Lubly Lady.’ She refused to take Foggartism seriously, and though she can hardly be blamed for that, it is possible that this does indicate a serious defect, something that would have wrecked a marriage with Jon. Quite early she has brought sweat to his brow by her flaunted indifference to what seemed so real to him—the suffering of humanity; and at a much later stage she mocks at his loyalty because ‘it makes everything terribly earnest in a world that isn’t worth it.’ Against this we have Michael’s view that it was her ‘eminently sane nature’ that caused her to ‘reject social problems as fruitless and incalculable’; and though it is not likely that she would ever have turned into (no one can wish that she should turn into) a Norah Curfew or a Mrs. Hilary Charwell, life with Jon might have taken the truculent edge off her attitude.

But the great and positive thing about Fleur—the consideration that finally puts to shame those who scorned her claims to equality

with Jon—is that she has a touch of genius in her composition, a thing that is not to be said of everybody. She has a genius for atonement. We get the first glimpse of this at the end of the *Saga*. Fleur has not been too good to her father since the Jon debacle; on occasion she has been cruel. Now she is married and off on the honeymoon. Soames watches her making her farewells.

'How would she treat him at this last moment of her girlhood? He couldn't hope for much!'

Her lips pressed the middle of his cheek.

"Daddy!" she said, and was past and gone. Daddy! She hadn't called him that for years. He drew a long breath and followed slowly down.'

Like Soames, we can forgive Fleur much for that. In *The White Monkey* we have a bigger instance. Fleur has flirted with Wilfrid Desert till Michael is in hell. At last it is over, and Michael knows he is reprieved. But he is battered and sore, and relations are not easily resumed, content not easily regained. She says she wants to be comforted. 'Ah! She knew exactly what to say, how to say it! And going on his knees, he began to comfort her.' That soothes, but it cannot heal. Then comes the stroke of genius. She tells him, with characteristic casualness, that she is going to have a baby. The earth grows solid under Michael's feet, the night lights up with stars.

One cannot help comparing this entirely successful use of the ancient cliché with its rather unfortunate repetition in *Swan Song*. It is a pity Galsworthy could think of no other way out for Anne. In her case it seems so much less original than with Fleur. The touch of genius is lacking. Moreover, Anne is so good that this solution ought not to have been necessary—unless we suppose, with Fleur, that Anne was 'unimportant,' and that she had to have a baby to make her 'important'!

There are two minor instances in *The Silver Spoon*, where Fleur, though bitterly annoyed at her father's well-meant interpositions in the affair of Majorie Ferrars, gratuitously and unexpectedly tells him she is sorry for some sharp things she has said to him. But the quality rises to genius again at Soames's death. The episode is too long to quote, but to watch Fleur sitting hour after hour by the bedside, bending close to her father, waiting for consciousness to return, and at last getting through to his understanding those few intense sentences—

"Dad, forgive me!" . . .
"I love you so." . . .
"Yes, Dad, I will be good!" —

is to know that Fleur atoned in that moment for all the wilfulness and all the lack of love she had shown in his life.

It seems demonstrable, then, that Fleur was not too bad; and if Fleur was not too bad Irene was wrong on both counts; and this underlines Soames's magnanimity. But it is, after all, no relative judgement that we are seeking, and in *A Modern Comedy*, and especially in *Swan Song*, Soames stands by himself, astonishing us. He was something like the villain of the *Saga*: he is undoubtedly the hero of *A Comedy*, and the only figure of heroic proportions therein. At moments he seems almost too good—flawless, idealised, a Scott hero; only that he is so full-bloodedly human all the time. But he has certainly run away with Galsworthy's heart, and one wonders if, like Milton's Satan, he grew a grander thing than his creator intended him to be.

Some measure of the change is seen in the fact that the 'habitual sniff' that characterised Soames in the earlier books has now become 'an air of slightly despising creation.' His way is strewn—not too thickly—with little unremembered acts: he buys balloons from Bicket, stops the car to see if he has hurt a pig, gets Butterfield a new situation, goes about the house putting pot-pourri bags, forgotten by the housekeeper, into beds. His picture-collecting, so long a mere matter of market-values, now bears fruit—he is moved by great art, and by nature; he is something of a philosopher. As he sits before the Saint Gaudens statue in Washington, the frozen acceptance of the great greenish-bronze figure carries him down to the bottom of his own soul. Over and over again the tranquil loveliness of the Thames restores him; he can imagine himself a lock-keeper, watching water go up and down. And in one bit of diagnosis of the ills of the age he goes a great deal deeper than all 'Old Mont's' brilliancies: 'They expect too much now; there's no interest taken in being alive.'

But of course the key to Soames's apotheosis is that love has come into his life. Galsworthy says it is Soames's tragedy that he is unlovable. This is not true of the Soames of the *Comedy*. The feeling he inspired in old Gradman and young Butterfield was something warmer than respect, and he was quite definitely loved by Ting-a-Ling, the otherwise cynical and self-centred Chinese dog.

And after all there is a tragedy far more bitter than that of being unloved : it is to be incapable of loving. It is the loveless whose hearts are dry as summer dust. Soames's love for Fleur is one of the marvellous things of literature. It infuses *The Silver Spoon* and *Swan Song* with a divine spirit, and leaves on the mind a succession of heart-stirring pictures : Soames with his teeth bared for his daughter's good name at the reception, Soames stepping splendidly into the breach and taking her round the world after her husband has rather miserably failed her, Soames watching her 'like a lynx—like a lover,' as she treads the precipice with Jon, and Soames in a demented rage when he fears she may have gone over it. Above all, there is his death and its meaning. 'It was as if, with his infallible instinct where she was concerned, Soames had taken the one step that could rid her of the fire which had been consuming her.' The long story ends here because it is not only the end of Soames but a new beginning for Fleur—a finer life with Michael, without the canker of the longing for Jon. And this was Soames's doing. No man's life can be called unhappy that has known a love like that. And, as we have seen, in spite of that 'something in him that had repelled feeling,' he did at last give Fleur her 'chance to show she had really loved him,' and she took it, and he died content. Dourly and absolutely himself from first to last, he began as an almost comically hateful figure and ends as one of the most memorable and best-loved characters in modern fiction.

*CANTON,**THE LAND AND WATER CITY.*

BY COLONEL P. T. ETHERTON, LATE ADDITIONAL ASSISTANT
JUDGE OF THE SUPREME COURT FOR CHINA.

IN 1637 a British ship of two hundred tons, one of the largest afloat in those days, sailed up the Pearl River in Southern China. It had left England some ten months before on the long voyage to the East round by Cape Horn, feeling its way through the dangers of an unknown Pacific Ocean by the aid of a chart found in a captured Spanish vessel. This frail cockleshell had braved the icy winds of the Southern Atlantic and the tempestuous seas off the Horn, to reach the Chinese port of Canton ; it was the pioneer British ship and it came to secure a cargo of tea and silks, of spices and other articles for which China was already famous. But although it had come so far and endured so much, the quest was in vain, the Chinese authorities were hostile, and so the gallant ship returned to England. But it was the beginning, and thereafter more ships set sail to secure the priceless cargoes, and Canton became the principal port in China.

It lies at the mouth of the third largest river in China, and to reach it from the open sea the way leads between islands and narrow channels, where the water is deep blue and the scenery not unlike that of the west coast of Scotland. So you come to the Pearl River, a misnomer, for its waters are thick and muddy and singularly unlike the jewel.

The city we are to visit lies about thirty-five miles up-stream from the narrow strait through which we have passed. Chinese boats, and craft of all descriptions, are met with ; the stately junk with its lofty stern and huge mat sails gliding slowly in and out amongst the mass of vessels, the tiny sampan in which a whole family lives, boats hewn out of tree-trunks as they were in prehistoric times, steamships from oversea, and boats painted every colour of the rainbow, some carrying passengers, some transporting goods of divers nature, pigs in baskets, bags of rice, vegetables heaped in a mass on the long and narrow decks, boxes of tea, and fish dried

in the sun. As the stream narrows so the country becomes flatter, and the way more packed with craft. Before us is a vast stretch of level land covered with houses of brick and stone, of wood and thatch, a mass of roofs without order or method, reaching down to the waterside, and out into the river itself, the houses supported on piles and with ladders leading to the front doorway.

There are the wharves and jetties seeming strangely out of place ; huge warehouses and godowns give the Western commercial touch, alongside of which steamers from overseas make fast. The whole place swarms with life and is bustling with the restless activity common to a Chinese city.

Such is the first view of Canton, the home of two million people, nearly half of whom live on the water ; they are born on the water, and leave it only at intervals to dispose of their catches of fish, or to make purchases in the city.

The entire family lives on the boat, they sleep in a rough cabin of matting, whilst the cooking is done aft on the poop, the washing dangles from the halyards, or is spread over every available inch of space.

Amongst these boats the sampan predominates, a long and narrow craft with a narrow stem and wide stern, partly covered in with matting. Living room is limited, and it is astonishing how a family of six to a dozen can exist in so cramped a space. There will be the husband and wife, possibly five or six children, the respective mothers-in-law, one or two aged relatives, a couple of dogs, a cat, half a dozen fowls, household boxes, and a tiny altar on which joss sticks are burnt to propitiate the gods.

The women are the cooks, crew, and helmsmen of the sampans ; indeed, woman is the dominant note. She manipulates the tiller, lights the fire and prepares the meals, mends the sails, scrubs the decks, washes the clothes, and rocks the cradle. Her dress is simple ; it is merely a loose jacket of blue or black cloth, with a pair of baggy trousers. Shoes are dispensed with and ornaments are unusual, but she devotes much time and attention to her hair. Her black tresses, carefully combed and oiled, are adorned with coloured pins of cotton and riband. She is the mother, the sailor, the master of the ship, and looks the part.

The floating population gains a scanty subsistence by carrying passengers, transporting goods here and there, and by fishing. Large and gaudily painted boats cater for the lighter side of life, there are floating restaurants, a replica of those found ashore, con-

cert boats where discordant music can be heard, and miniature floating casinos for the card player and the gambler.

The land part of Canton is enclosed by a wall along three of its sides, and on one side by the river. The city itself is a vast maze of streets, alleyways and narrow passages, varying in width from five to fifteen feet. They follow no general system, but run in all directions enclosed on either side by shops and houses with projecting eaves. So near to each other do the sides of these passages approach that it is an easy matter to shake hands across the intervening space, and an agile person could pass from roof to roof. Suspended in front of each shop is a signboard, seven or eight feet wide and a foot or more in width ; it has the name and calling of the shopkeeper in Chinese characters on a background of red or black lacquer, whilst it tells you the salient points of the goods that are for sale.

The streets are paved with stone, so loose and unevenly laid that you slip and stumble over them, for they are always wet and slimy from a fetid sludge. There is no sanitary service in Canton ; filth and rubbish of all descriptions, both liquid and solid, are cast into the street.

From early dawn until nightfall there is a continual hurrying crowd of coolies carrying everything slung from a pole across the shoulders, sedan chairmen, local officials hastening to their work or their homes, women out shopping, children playing in the fairway, and barbers exercising their calling in the open.

Shopping is a comparatively easy matter, for the various trades and professions have their own location, the boot and shoemakers in one street, the jewellers and silversmiths in another, butchers, fishmongers, potters, dealers in cloth and brocades, each in their own domain, where time-honoured custom forbids encroachment. Every variety of shop is met with, and when the purchases have been made there is the teashop for refreshment and the gossip of the day. The tea will be served in bowls, and the customer sits on a straight-backed chair, if one be available, or more frequently he squats upon the floor. The vendor of meat dumplings or small cakes comes and goes to supplement the tea ; he takes the coin in payment, uses his mouth as a purse, and deals out change from it to his patrons.

There are hotels of sorts, but to the majority the inn, as it exists in China, provides lodging where men, women, mules, dogs and cats are cheek by jowl. The Canton lodging-house will be a

building of blue-grey brick, with paper windows, a mud floor beaten hard, and a huge raised fireplace covered in, on top of which the guests sleep. There are curious contrasts to be met with ; at one such inn, owing to the theft of blankets, the proprietor had installed a large bedspread to cover the entire floor, which was raised and lowered morning and night by musical signal, the four corners being securely fastened to ground pegs.

Passing along the narrow thoroughfares you will see tiny recesses by the side of each shop, with a cup full of sand into which joss sticks are set, the votive offerings from which arises the incense for the well-being of departed spirits. The comfort of the latter, and the worship of their ancestors, form the leading feature in the social life of the Chinese from the richest to the humblest. It is the one influence that dominates all classes, and none dares neglect the worship of those who have gone before. At stated intervals in the year offerings are made to the spirits of ancestors, feasts are given, and when the festivities have terminated the Chinese has no further dread of evil spirits, nor will ill-luck befall his shop or his affairs.

There are many curious customs linked with ancestor worship ; the spirits of mothers, fathers, and relatives in general, must be ministered to, their wants supplied ; and their descendants are responsible that they do not lack creature comforts. Clothing, food, and money must be provided for their use. There are prominent instances of this, such as a Chinese official who died recently and had his expensive limousine car, equipped with dummy chauffeur and footman, duly burnt after his demise, in order that they might be available for him in the next world. This procedure was at variance with the usual custom, since make-believe offerings are the rule, and luxuries offered to the departed take the form of paper models and emblems. Money is merely joss paper with silver painted upon it, these being burnt so that the smoke may carry into the hands of the dead, where they assume the requisite shape and value.

Theatricals and the lighter side of life are met with in crowded Canton. Indeed, the theatre is really the Chinese national pastime.

The plays are mainly historical, dealing with the works and sayings of the sages who quitted this life two to four thousand years ago. There is great reverence for these historical pieces, for they revive the past, and anything with the stamp of age on it has first claim to consideration. The scenery is of a rough-and-

ready kind, and much of it is left to the imagination. There are usually no dressing-rooms for the cast, all changes of costume, the arranging and plaiting of the hair, and painting and powdering of the complexion, being carried out in the open in full view of the audience, who treat everything as a matter of course.

Dodging in and out amongst the crowd, its sides catching against rows of meat suspended from the front of a butcher's shop, or dislodging bales of goods heaped up over the alleyway, comes a closed sedan chair containing a bride *en route* to her wedding. A maxim of Chinese social life decrees marriage as a duty, but it is a purely commercial transaction. No love-making marks its inception, no letters protesting undying affection; the affair is one for adjustment between families and the go-between who is deputed to arrange suitable matches.

Once a girl leaves her own home she passes into another world, a new sphere of which she has no previous knowledge, where she may meet a tyrannical mother-in-law, apart from contact for the first time with the man to whom she has been given. He, likewise, has misgivings, since he is uncertain of joy or sorrow, tranquillity or strife, in the future. The astrologer will have been called in to cast the horoscope of the couple, but even then the future is very much on the knees of the gods.

The Cantonese is fond of the good things of life, but they take queer forms, and the food has a certain novelty. There are restaurants in almost every street, each customer being provided with chopsticks, unless he happens to have his own with him, a small wine cup, and saucers for condiments and spices. The choice of dishes is extensive, varying with the status of the house; liver of all kinds, sea slugs, preserved eggs, the older the egg the greater its edible value, stag's tendons, lotus seeds, duck, geese, dogs and cats hanging up in select restaurants, dried fish, pork and fowls.

It is said that there is nothing new under the sun, but there are things in Canton new to most people. Rats are esteemed a delicacy; I was told they restore the hair in cases of baldness, whilst a stewed black cat will ward off a fever. The rats are boiled, or they can be grilled if preferred.

Let us now see how law and order are maintained in this land and water community.

The Chinese are an essentially peace-loving people, always anxious to avoid coming into contact with the law. The police

system in Canton continues along the same lines that it has followed for centuries. The city is divided into wards, each under a minor police official with whom are watchmen to perambulate the streets at night. None of these individuals is paid by the State, but custom has decreed that they shall collect a periodical sum from each house, shop- and boat-keeper. A ward may number from eighty to one hundred houses and has a policeman allotted to it. Should there be any default in payment of the above sum the inspectors and watchmen have their own method of bringing the delinquents to book ; they not uncommonly achieve the desired result by the simple expedient of a burglary.

It will be seen that the police and watchmen are paid by the public, but they are also recompensed by the thieves and gambling community, so that we have the phenomenon of the two powers of light and darkness in league against the public. It sometimes happens that the police are themselves the receivers of stolen goods and play the leading part in division of the spoils.

Life is original in Canton and pursues the identical course that it did a thousand years ago. For instance, guilds were formed before the Christian era ; even the beggars have their guild to which all the mendicants belong, and which collects a regular subscription from the Canton residents. As there are no workhouses or poor relief, the beggars are left to their own resources. They are considerate in their methods, levying a contribution to save the householder and trader from being importuned.

Canton, with its city and its floating population, weird institutions, and every phase of old Chinese life, is a sight worth seeing, where realism can be studied with effect.

The city is typical of China, for in it we see the majority of the people as they are. Despite being hustled by the West, and the introduction of foreign influence, all China still holds firmly to ancient custom. The influence of the West does not really touch the people, and of this conviction the traveller throughout China has ample proof. The bulk of the Chinese remain inscrutably bound up in the past, the masses resent the introduction of new ideas and the attempt to graft on them new ways, for China is the land of old custom, and the people cling to their beliefs with extraordinary tenacity.

In the international settlement at Shemeen, a tiny island off Canton that is a model city, you see the West transported to the East, and where all is law and order ; but although large numbers

of Chinese live and trade there they do not emulate the foreigner elsewhere ; they share his wonders and amenities, but age-old conservatism is against the adoption of these things as part of the national life and being.

When the railway was introduced into China with the aid of foreign capital, mostly British, the opposition was great and the difficulties raised by the superstitious Chinese were many, for they were aghast at the shrieking locomotive disturbing the sleep of their ancestors. It took much time, labour and patience to convince the ruling authorities of the benefits to be derived from the railway, but in the end a reluctant consent was given.

No nation in the world can compare with China in its devotion to the past, to conservatism, and to everything that has the stamp of antiquity, a factor that has first claim to consideration. In order to gain a clear idea of the existing situation in China, and what is likely to be the outcome of the present state of chaos and anarchy reigning practically throughout the entire country, it may be of interest to comment on this, since Canton, as the principal city in the south and the one from where much of the trouble has emanated, is the pivot on which the political stage is mainly turning.

First of all it should be remembered that the Chinese of the south are totally different from those of the north. The Cantonese cannot understand the Pekinese, nor can a Chinese from Shanghai make himself understood to one in the far west. In the province of Fukien, adjacent to Canton, over eighty languages and dialects are spoken, and the same applies to many of the provinces in the centre and west, with the result that we have a vast conglomeration of peoples who are out of touch with each other, living their own lives, each self-supporting in their own district, governed locally by a patriarchal system, and desiring only to be left alone to go on after the manner of their ancestors.

Patriotism and a public spirit do not exist in China. There is no word to express patriotism in the Chinese language, and nothing that corresponds to the western idea of working for the national and common good. Then again, the attempt to create a republic in China is foreign to the national temperament, for the essential factors for real republicanism do not exist, and until they are created the rule must necessarily be oligarchic. I have always noted with what respect the Chinese regarded the emperor as the father of the people, the head of the nation, and the only factor

that kept the unwieldy and cosmopolitan mass together. More than ninety per cent of the Chinese people will argue in the words of Confucius, the saint whose sayings and commands have controlled a quarter of the human race for two thousand five hundred years, that the only satisfactory form of government is the family presided over by the head, and not by a changeable president whose existence is transitory, devoid of prestige and the glamour of age and history, and at variance with Confucius whose teachings, as already remarked, dominate the people.

To some extent all China is in the melting-pot ; great schemes are in the making, and Canton, with its neighbouring city of Nanking, will figure prominently in the attempted transformation. At the moment Nanking is the so-called capital of China. It has a republic that is able to exert its authority only within a few hundred miles of its centre, an insignificant area when we remember that China covers a seventh of the land surface of the globe and has a population of more than four hundred millions, but a population of diverse interests, of language, and political thought. Who can say what will eventuate as the solution of this colossal problem ? The ablest authorities on China and the Chinese have expressed their opinion, but we still remain dubious as to the outcome of the present strife, for none can prophesy with certainty when the factors are so conflicting and divergent.

From a close study of China and the Chinese, it would seem that only the rise of a strong man, imbued with the ideals that dominate the minds of the Chinese, free from the dictates of foreign and Communist agitators, and gifted with a rare patriotism and public spirit, moving on imperial lines but adapted to modern demands, can weld the Chinese people and render them fitted to take a place in the comity of nations. In the words of the Chinese proverb, ‘ An army can be found, a leader is difficult.’

THE GREY TASSEL TREE.

THE gardener hacked manfully at that shrub which the Catalogue calls *Garrya Elliptica* but for which the children of Four Winds had always had a simpler name—the Grey Tassel tree.

The last of those children was now an old lady, an old lady in a full foulard dress, a black lace scarf and a wide black hat. Her face was pink with suppressed anger, her eyes bright with suppressed tears.

'Gardener,' she begged (she could not remember the new man's name, all gardeners were John to her). Again: 'Gardener, did the Major tell you to cut down that tree?'

'No, ma'am . . . miss. It was the mistress. She's having a Japanese maple here for the rock garden and much better it will be. This is a dull old-fashioned thing, as the mistress says.'

'But,' stammered the old lady, painfully excited, 'you can't . . . you must stop . . . you don't know, my Mother planted it.'

The gardener paused. He had an old mother and he was just a little bit sorry for the old lady.

'Well, ma'am . . . I had my orders. You'll see the maple will look better.'

'Oh! no . . . no . . . no . . . My dear Mother . . . she loved it. We called it the Grey Tassel tree. It's been here all these years. You must wait till I tell him.'

The old lady tottered away on her heelless slippers. The gardener waited till she was out of sight, then he finished off the tree. It crashed and he felt satisfied. He loved to cut down trees, he could hardly tell why, but most men and most gardeners are of this pattern.

Her mind bubbled with exhortation: 'Hubert . . . the Grey Tassel tree . . . the one your grandmother planted. You must be firm. Edith mustn't be allowed to modernise everything. I never interfere . . . as you know. But you're a Mordaunt and so am I. Edith isn't. . . . She's a Searle . . . they were town people . . . Cockneys. You must speak out, Hubert.'

All the brave words rose in whispers to the breathless lips of the little pink-faced old lady. She went into the house by the

garden door. Hubert might be in his study. With him she could face Edith. He was lazy, indifferent, but he could be sarcastic. She enjoyed it, she loved to hear the sarcasm play about Edith's neat head. This time he would really be angry. There would be a scene. She hated scenes, but this time she could be glad.

The study was empty, it held only that wraith of Hubert, a friendly smell of pipe and tweed and leather chair.

She stood there looking blankly about her. This room was so much as her father had had it. Edith and the Searles with their modern ways and scents had not really made an impression here.

Then rather hastily, surprisingly, Edith was in the room, Edith so neat and so exquisite in her grey skirt and jumper, her long gold chain with its monocle, her long ear-rings, her thin powdered nose, her neat brown head.

'Aunt Essie! did you want anything here? Hubert has gone out in the car, he'll be out for lunch.'

Miss Mordaunt braced herself. Meek spirits stagger into battle with the strong, tripping as they rush at the scornful foe.

'Yes . . . I wanted to tell Hubert. The new man is cutting down the Garrya Elliptica—the Grey Tassel tree. I told him to stop, Hubert can't know. His grandmother planted it. We all loved it. It's vandalism . . . so many memories . . .'

Edith twisted her chain. She looked very calmly at the old lady.

'My dear Aunt Essie' . . . Edith's endearments had a withering wind in them, they were only extorted by aggravation, 'you mustn't excite yourself so. Hobson is acting under my orders. The tree is in my rock garden . . . it is out of place. I want a maple tree. Each generation has its own ideas . . . your mother had hers, quite modern in her time. I have another. I really cannot have Hobson confused by counter orders. I thought . . . when you came to live here, that you understood that.'

The old lady's face crumpled, worked. She fumbled for a handkerchief, a linen handkerchief marked 'E' in one corner. She sobbed. Edith gazed at her.

'Dear Aunt Essie, don't be absurd. It's just a trifle. But Hubert wouldn't dream of objecting to my orders. It is *my* garden now as it was your mother's garden then. Please let us close the subject as it upsets you. There's a new copy of *The Queen* in the drawing-room. Why not look at it?'

A little later at tea-time Hubert came in through the french window to the drawing-room. His wife was alone.

'Hulloa ! Alone ? Where's Aunt Essie ?'

'She has a headache, she's lying down.'

'Oh ! I'll bring her her tea.'

'Don't, Hubert, please, Simpson has brought her tea already.'

Hubert sat down, a little glumly. His eyes looked vaguely at the carpet. Edith's glance was intent. She was conscious of the room, of her husband in a spirit so detached that she seemed to herself to look at a picture. Yet the very stillness of it all, her keen consciousness of the objective values of the picture, had something ominous to her own mind. The Chippendale mirror with its gilded birds, the mantelpiece with its candlesticks and china figures, the old brass fender and the bearskin rug belonged to an Interior where Hubert sat, his moody profile to the spectator. She was the spectator, curious and a little bit interested. She had been so close to this man physically, intellectually at one time ; now they had drifted apart. He was merely 'Portrait of a man' in a pleasant 'Interior.'

'I can't think why you had the Garrya cut down.'

'Ah ! So Aunt Essie has lain in wait for you to tell her grievance.'

'Not at all. Clever women are rarely wise, my dear Edith. Being quite stupid I add the first two to the second two. I met Hobson in the garden ; he told me he had been working for you, that he'd cut the Garrya down and taken the stump out. He said he thought Miss Mordaunt was very upset but he didn't like to disobey you. Then I come in and hear that Aunt Essie has a headache . . . tears I suppose. I can't think why you have grown so hard, Edith.'

'I haven't *grown* anything. I am what I always was. It is you who have grown discontented with what I am. You've been obstinately and parochially Mordaunt ever since the old woman came here to upset us. She's always drawing you with invisible ropes. You and all your ancestors and relations are a Coalition against me because I'm a Searle and not a Mordaunt.'

'Excuse me, you're a Mordaunt now.'

'No more than your grandmother was when she planted that wretched old Garrya bush.'

Hubert pushed his cup away and walked to a window. He stood there gloomily. Edith drank her tea and gazed earnestly

at the little scene at the bottom of her Wedgwood cup. Things seemed to have a curious value. Every object was becalmed as it were, ominous as before a thunderstorm.

'Anyway,' he said, 'life is rather impossible.'

Edith detected in his masculine 'Anyway' a shelving of those hours of argument that were her due.

'A wife has a right to object to her husband's aunt as a fixture in the house.'

'She was always here. She's my godmother . . . and besides she belongs to things.'

'Very well then, I'll go away—I *don't* belong to things.'

'Nonsense. I could take Aunt Essie away for a time.'

Edith looked across the room. Still the ominous quiet of everything. The room waited, chintz-covered chairs, water-colours on the walls, Persian rugs, Cantigalli jugs full of Michaelmas daisies and montbretia, holding their breath, it seemed for her answer. She might break the stillness, tear it asunder with a sob, with an appeal to his love, his pity. Instead she said carelessly: 'Just as you like.'

Edith and her cousin sat together in a bedroom in the nursing-home which the surgeon had advised.

'It's a very nice home really,' said the cousin as she looked about her; 'how well they do these places nowadays and well they may at such a price.'

Edith from the easy chair by the fire looked about her at the grey walls, the chintz-covered screen, the pretty furniture. She smiled wryly. Her face had grown pinched and old looking.

'There's something sacrificial about the room, isn't there?' she asked. 'The victims are treated so well. It's all so clean, so austere, but there the sacrifice is, being made ready for the knives in the morning. No . . . I'm not grumbling. I'm not more frightened than other people. But you're caught, yes, like the scriptural ram in the thicket. You can't get away from it, the ablutions, the rites, the solemn procession, the knives. It's the loneliness!'

Her voice broke, she bit her lip and looked at the fire. The cousin who was playing the Samaritan's rôle fidgeted in her chair. She had known Edith from her childhood and had never liked her very much. But she had played games with her. And when she had heard of the approaching operation—a serious one too,

Edith said, she had come to her. Poor Edith! she was a lonely creature. One did not wonder. She had a bitter tongue. Hubert had borne it all so long, but there had been some quarrel and they had separated.

The cousin looked up. Hubert's photograph stood on the mantelpiece beside the vase in which they had put the branches of Garrya which the cousin had brought from her country home.

'Edith,' she began nervously, 'wouldn't Hubert come and see you? You're not divorced. He was always such a good sort was Hubert . . . we all liked him. Did you quarrel very badly? I never heard.'

Edith still gazed at the fire.

'One's husband's relations cause a lot of trouble,' she remarked, 'they never forgive the wife for not being one of themselves. Hubert's old aunt was the trouble. He would have her and she aggravated me to frenzy. Oh! she was a nice old thing but she stood for the past, for everything stuffy and tiresome. It's so queer you should have brought me that bunch of Garrya, for it started the worst trouble.'

'I'm sorry,' said the cousin, 'there were so few flowers and it lives so long. Besides I love those long grey tassels, but I'll take it away or burn it.'

'No, don't,' Edith said, 'it's like hyssop—wasn't that a penitential herb? You see it's strange but I'm sorry. When you live near death it changes all your point of view. It all gets different, what's worth while, what isn't. When the surgeon tells you it's a major operation, *that* is Judgment Day, but you're the judge yourself.'

'You mustn't be morbid, Edith.'

'No, morbid people are sometimes only truthful. I won't bore you with my penitence. I've got to face it out alone with myself and Aunt Essie and the Grey Tassel tree. But Maud, do one thing for me. You're my nearest relation. I wrote a letter to Hubert. When I die you're to send it to him. Will you, please?'

'But, Edith, you won't die. Don't talk about it.'

'Never mind, take the letter and send it to Hubert when I'm dead. You can address it to Four Winds. I believe the people are gone and that he's coming back there. You know Aunt Essie had a stroke. She was paralysed and her mind went. Hubert had to put her in a nursing-home but he visited her every day. I don't know if she knew him. We haven't met since she died.'

Hubert went out to South Africa for a time. He's very good about money.'

'I wish,' the cousin began, 'oh ! Edith, do get him to come.' She was interrupted by a nurse, who looked in.

'Mrs. Mordaunt must go to bed early,' she said, 'I'm sorry . . . a few minutes more if you like.'

But the visitor rose, Edith too was standing. 'This is the first stage of the sacrifice,' she said, 'they paint you and scrape you and do horrible things to you. One must be alone . . . oh ! so much alone. You've got to be born and to die alone. Good-bye, Maud, and thank you for the Garrya and for your visit.'

Some time later Edith Mordaunt was alone. She begged to keep her light on. She lay in bed and her eyes rested on the Garrya, so cheerfully green with its long grey-green tassels. It threw a shadow on the wall. Edith looked at it till she fell into restless sleep.

Edith opened her eyes. She blinked at the mantelpiece. It was enamelled white. She was conscious that it was a mantelpiece, yes, a mantelpiece. She had seen it before. She must hold to it, for it was real, and she was slowly coming out of the vague region of dreams. Yes, the doctor had been talking to her. The surgeon and the anaesthetist had talked and she had been trying to be so calm and cheerful and to breathe so steadily, just so and so. Then a queer noise had come, a sort of dripping that grew louder and louder like hailstones on glass and the people round her had been saying things in loud queer voices that beat in the top of her head. The top of her head was lifting, it was all so—yes, it *was* the mantelpiece in her own room.

'But she's come for me, the old lady by the mantelpiece—don't you see her ?'

'No, no, Mrs. Mordaunt. It's just the ether. You'll be clearer soon. There ! shut your eyes a little while. You're still dreaming. But you'll be all right soon.'

'No, I shall be sick soon. But the old lady is there. I see her all the time. She has come to judge me. I cut her bush down and it's her turn to laugh, for I'm dying.'

'Nonsense ! you're still wandering. It's the horrid ether. You can smell it still.'

Edith Mordaunt turned her face away. She looked at the window. The sash of the window, the blind tassel. These were real things, she would look at them and wait for death.

Aunt Essie could wait till the end. And there was the vase with the Garrya branch against the cream-coloured wall. It was outlined so darkly and the long grey tassels hung there so beautifully. And there was Aunt Essie beside it. She was smiling and looking at Edith.

Edith shut her eyes. She felt sick. She must not move. Then she peeped again between half-closed lids. Yes, it was Aunt Essie. But Aunt Essie had died, so this must be a signal of her own death.

How strange! She was dying and Aunt Essie and the Garrya branch were telling her so.

'There now! you're coming round so nicely, just keep still and rest. It's all over now.'

'I'm dying, Nurse.'

'Oh! no, Mrs. Mordaunt. You're going to be much better now.'

The Matron of the Home came down to speak to Major Mordaunt.

'So,' she thought, 'there *was* a husband. Quite a nice one too.'

Aloud she said: 'Yes, you can see Mrs. Mordaunt for a little. She needs rousing. She is very low. She seems to have no wish to live, an obsession that she is dying, but the operation was quite successful, there is no reason why she should not make a good recovery. I've sent Nurse to prepare her for your visit. Ah! here she is, she'll take you to Mrs. Mordaunt's room.'

Hubert waited till the door closed, then he kissed his wife. He had never seen her look so plain, he had never felt so pitifully to her.

'My poor Edith! Why didn't you send for me?'

'I didn't want to bother you. I'm hard, but I can face life and death too. You'll be free of me soon, Hubert.'

'Nonsense. I'm going to take you to Four Winds—or where you like just as soon as you're strong enough. We Mordaunts never believed in divorces or separations. We believe in sticking to each other.'

'But I'm a Searle, Hubert.'

'Excuse me, you're a Mordaunt. Don't argue, it's bad for you.'

Edith smiled wanly, she left her hand in her husband's.

'No . . . no, I can't get off so easily. The loneliness is my punishment. Oh! Hubert, I *know* . . . I *know* now what old, ill people suffer in loneliness. I've had it and soon I must die alone.'

'Edith! Why? You're going to recover. What makes you talk like this?'

'I'll tell you, Hubert. It isn't raving or delirium. But Aunt Essie has been here. She was the first person I saw when I came round from the ether; but I've seen her several times. She stands there by the Garrya branch on the mantelpiece. She looks very kind and smiling. But she's come to warn me that I'm dying.'

Hubert looked at the shrub with its pendulous greenish tassels.

'No, you've got it wrong,' he said firmly. 'I knew Aunt Essie as you never did. She's come to tell you to take hope, to come back to life. You know, although her mind at last was so clouded, she often had lucid times when she knew me. Once she said: "You and Edith must make Four Winds a happy place." She has come to you here to remind you of that. After all, Edith, you always had pluck. It's harder to live than to die, and it's harder to forgive oneself than anyone else. Have you the pluck to do that?'

'With you to help, Hubert?'

'With each to help the other?'

'Hubert . . . ?'

'Yes?'

'I wrote you a letter in case I died. I gave it to Maud to give you if I did.'

'Yes, I know, Edith.'

'But how do you know?'

'My dear, Maud is wise. She sent it to me at once and said that I'd better have it now. It just made all the difference, Edith. It made me know you as I couldn't know you without that letter. Why should I have found you only to lose you in death? You spoke as one soul to another. We are still souls—merely clothed upon.'

He held her hand warmly in his.

'Hubert, I'm going to get better. I feel it all through me. When I'm at Four Winds I want you to get me something.'

'Anything—but what?'

'Another Garrya, to plant in deep penitence where the other one was. The maple can be moved to make room for it.'

'It won't hurt you too much?' he asked curiously.

'I want to be hurt. Grey tassels shall be my reminder.'

W. M. LETTS.

BROWNING'S ANSWER.

BY ROWLAND GREY.

To write those words, is to feel again the magic cold clean touch of the wind from the glittering towers of silence keeping watch and ward over Pontresina upon a far-away August afternoon—momentous, thyme-scented. To remember also a tall girl in white serge cut in some queer tight mode, standing half hidden among the pine trees, with all their hot fragrance drawn out in the crisp hot air. There, with a quick-beating heart she was waiting, waiting, to see Robert Browning pass by. ‘A prophet, yea, and more than a prophet’ then, to his legion disciples. Was ever such a watch-word as ‘the best is yet to be’? If assuredly we did not want to accept his other invitation to ‘grow old,’ we were ardent to meet his radiant optimism with our radiant faith.

The man for the mood of that moment was the man who ‘never doubted clouds would break.’ We were tired of uncertainty, even set to Tennyson’s compelling music. For us the hero of the great romance, when ‘the good stars met’ in the horoscope of two poets. For us the knight combatant death himself could not rob of his lady. ‘O thou soul of my soul, I shall clasp thee again.’ Such was the clarion call of triumph. We forgave him for insisting that we have to ‘miss the man’s joy,’ to ‘claim the artist’s sorrow,’ because he gloriously contradicted himself. We were all young and all in love with ideals. How we welcomed the leader not ‘lost’ yet.

Imagination vividly pictured the never-was-to-be of a smile, a word, unlocking a heart full of homage, without ever ‘a sonnet key.’ Fluent Americans stopped Browning every day with tinsel clink of compliment. An English girl could only wish, watch, and be still. At last someone short and neat came leisurely along, talking to an enviable companion said to be Sister Sarianna, also very neat under a green parasol. A momentary glance at a kind, keen face, a long look at the back of a grey tweed coat. That was all. The intent gazer never saw Browning again, although he remained intricately interwoven with her real—that is inward—

life. Constant connections with those who had known him ran through its fabric like gold threads.

It was a relief to see him clad in homespun. Fancy dress is too petty for genius. At Bunthorne's zenith, it would have been inconceivable to find Browning walking down Piccadilly—or Pontresina—‘with a poppy or a lily in his medieval hand.’ It was impossible not to smile when long afterwards the tale was told of Henriette Corkran’s bitter disappointment as a child, when Browning in a drab overcoat arrived breathless at the top of the steep stairs of her Paris home *au troisième* with a slender wonder in his arms huddled in a tartan shawl. God-daughter of magnificent Alfred de Vigny, Henriette regarded curls and essences, gold-sprigged velvet waistcoats with opulent backgrounds for splendid watch-chains, as hall-marks for poets. She and her demurer sister, Alice, were ready to weep for their visionary fairy prince. For had not Browning set even the grown-ups a-flutter by snatching away a Princess imprisoned in Wimpole Street, actually the ‘dark unlovely street’ of Tennyson’s *In Memoriam*? Thence they were to fly to Italy where there were ripe oranges on all the hedges.

The sole consolation was that Flush, already famous in verse, trotted behind barking madly. ‘We thought Mrs. Browning’s drooping ringlets made *her* look rather like a spaniel,’ commented Henriette. ‘She talked mostly to Alice and me, boasting how this pattern pup invariably finished a piece of bread and butter before touching the bit of cake beside it. If we privately thought Flush stupid, it was not for long, for after the historic visit was over, that bread guiltless of butter was found tidily bestowed behind a curtain.’

The echo of the funeral music at Westminster Abbey, when Browning was laid there despite his own desire to rest in Florence, had scarcely died away. The wistful anthem, with Elizabeth’s own words, still haunted many who felt that these two should not have been divided in death. The strong hand had barely laid down the pen, when in Rome at the time when all the flower girls hold up posies of pale mauve stocks with a cry of ‘*Viole di Pasqua*,’ the semblance of it came before my eyes again. It was a pale cast from white marble, and it enfolded another exquisitely shaped. They lay forlorn, amid tasteless gimcracks on the plush table-cover of a banal hotel sitting-room, with a pathos all their own. They

looked ghostly, yet as if they held some lovely secret. The bedizened cosmopolitan hostess of an oddly mixed company on that Easter evening, explained that Harriet Hosmer, the sculptor of the hands which were the hands of the Brownings, was expected. That no one in Rome was better worth meeting or half as hard to secure to be met.

Presently the door opened to let in surely the original of Thackeray's Fairy Blackstick of 'The Rose and the Ring.' Short and slight, she wore her rusty raiment with a brisk air, unabashed by contrasting smartness. Over eighty, with black eyes still sparkling, and the wittiest of all caustic tongues, she was at once the centre of attraction. Bored faces lit up at the sound of that racy talk in its strident American accent. No one stared any more at a picturesque captain of the Pope's Swiss Guard in Michael Angelo's own uniform, justifying his reputation of being the handsomest man in Rome. Even the courtly anecdote of Hare of 'Walks in Rome,' urbanest of tea-party lions, was at a discount. Harriet Hosmer related with gusto, how she had driven the first train that ever puffed into her native State. 'I just told the engine-driver I'd got to.' She also told with a sly glance at the immaculately tailored Hare as if she longed to shock him, how in the dear old days the dirt in Rome was such 'That when I sculpted, my bare arms were black with the fleas sitting around.' What she did not tell, was whence came the tender charm investing that dull plaster. 'Browning was a *man*,' she insisted with emphasis. 'I guess if he hadn't married Elizabeth we might forget her. We can't forget the things she did because of him.' Those things being the sonnets, this was nearer the truth than we of the earliest nineties believed. Not yet had highbrows decided that one whom Carducci had ranked with Sappho, was a hopeless back number. Not yet were they irritated by the persistence of the French, who in their opinion should know better, in still calling her a genius. As in the cases of Hardy and Kipling, quite a French literature has sprung up round Mrs. Browning. Her work and personality exercise an equal attraction. Indeed, her sole adequate biography has been written by a Frenchwoman. 'Mademoiselle Merlette,' said her friend Henriette Corkran, 'was like a shy little brown bird. She wrote the life to get some Paris degree. The thesis was the question whether a woman could attain to the highest eminence in art, without neglecting the duties of wife and mother. She chose Mrs. Browning as supplying a triumphant affirmative, and died too soon.'

to know how well she had proved her case.' It is strange this excellent book has never been translated.

To travel on to Florence, was to linger long beside the grave where Clough and Landor make a poets' corner with Mrs. Browning, where the red anemones burn in the grass like sparks from the immortal passion. It was to read in one dark glimpse of a dark room in *Casa Guidi*, an immortal love-story. 'A soul of fire in a shell of pearl.' *Suo verso, oro anello fra Italia è Inghilterra.* Half a dozen French and Belgian poets have striven in vain to capture the sonnets and bind them in their silver chains. The magic eludes them. They become soulless. *La première fois qu'il me donna un baiser, il ne baise que la main avec laquelle j'écris.* Where is the fire, the *élan* of, 'First time he kissed me ?' Heavy-handed Germans rob them of all harmony, it is only the Italian cry '*Di ancor che m'ami*' that thrills sweet and clear.

To leave Italy and begin a new spring with new cowslips at Lucerne, did not mean leaving the Brownings in that auspicious year. Good fortune brought an acquaintance with Mrs. Browning's brother Octavius Moulton-Barrett. He was a typical country gentleman of the old school, for whom a beautiful house near Carisbrooke with a procession of peacocks strutting on mint-sauce lawns was the exact setting. He was not in the least like her. He wore his attractive old age greenly and was very hospitable. It was impossible to convey to him what his stream of talk about 'poor Ba' meant to his enthralled listener. That talk flowed on as he handled a snuff-box with a dainty miniature of Elizabeth on the lid as a three-year-old fairy. He even pointed out a casket locked as if it still contained her petitions for forgiveness to the obdurate father who never pardoned her marriage, but sent them back to her years afterwards unopened. Octavius broke out in furious anathema against his nephew for the just completed sale of the love-letters. Had he forgotten, or was he ignorant of the fact, that for exalted reasons the publication had been sanctioned by Browning himself ?

'My old Dad was hasty, very hasty,' he remarked when he had cooled down somewhat. 'I daresay you have heard it said that he knocked my sister over when she told him poor Ba had gone off with Robert.' Although this was indeed the accepted tradition, it seemed politic to hint that rumour was usually unreliable. 'The fact of the matter was,' he continued, 'my old Dad was standing upon the staircase with a heavy book in his hand, he threw it down, or dropped it or something, and she slipped down in dodging it.'

(!!) His own connection with art was manifested by some water-colours of merit. It was therefore disappointing to find that although speaking of Browning with warm affection, he was quite uninterested in his poetry or in 'poor Ba's.' There was no hope of sidelights upon the title of the sonnets round which the violets of quite a bed of legends then clustered, only to be ignored by the ever-accurate Merlette.

To pass Pisa in the train with naïve satisfaction in the discovery that the tower really leant over quite as startlingly as in a tiny model in a cabinet at home, was to think of the words of Albert Savine. *Pendant le séjour à Pise Elizabeth glissa dans sa poche du veston par derrière, pour qu'il ne peut la voir, une liasse de papiers. . . Ce petit paquet de paperasses c'était les sonnets traduis du Portugais.* Translated! Was it a slip of the pen, or could a French critic thus blunder?

It was not many years after my visit to Octavius Moulton-Barrett and his peacocks that the Pioneer Club celebrated the centenary of Elizabeth Barrett Browning. An elder brother then definitely settled the disputed date of her birth by sending a copy of its register, and despite his detestation of publicity, Octavius actually lent one of her letters—to set us all admiring its handwriting.

It was a great moment for the organizer, wearing bay and narcissus stolen from the posy Swinburne had sent via Watts Dunton with a sympathetic message. For had not Alice Meynell promised to give the appreciation, and was she not standing there stately in the soft black draperies of Sargent's life-like sketch, 'The Black Lily'? An appealing tenor sang Maude Valerie White's unique setting of a sonnet 'How do I love thee.' The room that exaggerating reporters described as holding 'all literary London,' was happily small enough for us not to miss one clear word. Mrs. Meynell's delicate oratory was unfit for the large halls she could not fill; and Lord Chesterfield's some time 'saloon' with its fine Adam ceiling was made for her. 'Spiritual, ardent, abundant, righteous,' such were the epithets she bestowed on Mrs. Browning. Despite its acknowledgment of her weak points, it was a most generous tribute, all unexpectedly based upon the perfections of 'The Sea Mew,' the speaker's own favourite among the poems. Yet she said also, 'To lead her into Wordsworth's presence is to do her genius a singular honour. . . And we pay her genius this honour gladly, because her sonnets are indeed exquisite poems.'

No wonder Pioneers tried to induce her to come again when Browning himself was in question. Incidentally she then gave the much-abused postcard a claim to become literature.

' 2, GRANVILLE PLACE.
February 2nd, 1912.

DEAR MISS ROWLAND GREY,

Please forgive a post-card in haste. Thank you very much for your kind invitation to speak on Browning. But I am not the right person. I am not of the admirers who should celebrate a man I acknowledge to be great, though not the poet I love. *I think his work is detective rather than speculative.* There is only "Saul" and "One Word More," I completely love. A. M.'

Only two or three still recollect that Mrs. Browning's centenary was worthily commemorated in France at little Vals les Bains where brilliant Lucie Faure had spoken eloquently, where poets made her ardent praise an excuse for new versions of the sonnets. '*Si j'ai la velleité de comparer cette rose aux sonnets portugais j'y renonce, et je les imagine plutôt comme une ardente forêt d'automne dans la pure clarté d'un rayon du soleil.*'

All this has slipped into a remote, pre-war past. But here comes in a present link with that past. Readers of CORNHILL may recall not long since certain letters of W. S. Gilbert, addressed to his friend Mrs. Talbot. In recent talk with Mrs. Talbot it came out as a charming surprise to her hearer, that from a child she had been equally intimate with Browning. She may surely claim to have helped him to the perfect knowledge of girlhood he shares with Turgenev—'A pearl, a girl,' 'Evelyn Hope,' and the exquisite lily Pompilia. It is a privilege to be allowed to quote her own words: 'About Browning it is difficult to put in a letter what I know. You see I knew him from a tiny girl, and he became so familiar I never thought of him as awe-inspiring or anything but a dear old friend. He loved me, and there never was a question of flirting though I am sure he was that at times!' 'Wobert Bwowning was a flirt,' had indeed been asserted by the ubiquitous Henriette Corkran, unable to cope with the letter R, and Mrs. Talbot here answers a question. 'Only one thing I feel convinced of was that nothing could eclipse his adoration for the memory of his wife. He never spoke of her to me till my cousin married his son, and then he often mentioned her name. A little incident is the following. I felt shy when he asked me if I wanted some

more autographs for my book, and put her name with others I asked for. I waited till he was going away, went after him and said : "There is one autograph I do want, that is Mrs. Browning's." I can now see his face become serious, and a sweet expression steal over it. He gave me a kiss and said, "Yes, my child, you shall have one," and I send a copy of the letter that came with it. It came privately, done up with others he sent me.'

19, WARWICK CRESCENT.

May 25th, 1885.

DEAR MARY,—

I enclose the autograph I could only give away to such a darling maker of requests as yourself. Yours affectionately ever, Robert Browning.'

'If any young girl wanted to meet him and I asked him, he would consent, and be so simple and charming with them,' continues Mrs. Talbot ; 'certainly his conversation was never abstruse like his writing. He was a great raconteur, and it never did to invite another conversationalist for the same evening !!'

Only two years before the end came on December 12, 1887, he wrote to his friend regarding the final settlement of the still vexed question of the naming of the sonnets, set at rest in the letters, by Elizabeth herself.

MY DEAR MARY,—

There are many memoirs of E. B. B. published in England and America ; all more or less faulty. The best of these as far as I know is the article by Mrs. Ritchie (Miss Thackeray) in Leslie Stephen's Biographical Dictionary. The latest is one by John H. Ingram professing to be "correct if short." Its incorrectness is such that my brother-in-law George Moulton Barrett has written to me a long letter by way of rectification, and in consequence I have just put his few "facts" together in a prefatory note which will be printed and inserted in a little collection of poems by E. B. B. Smith and Elder are bringing out. I will give you a copy when I get one. The sonnets were addressed to my unworthy self before marriage. I never saw or heard of their existence till two years after that event, and this happened through a misapprehension of something I had said about and against the exposure of one's private feelings to the world : luckily I said long afterwards something else which better suited their particular case, and my wife told me she herself had written something to me, "that book on the little table there if you care to see it." And it was only at

my entreaty that such beauty and power should not be suppressed simply because it glorified an undeserving person, that publication was consented to. But the writer was anxious that some disguise should be adopted, and I suggested the ambiguous title "Sonnets from the Portuguese," which seems to mean a translation from the Portuguese, but really referred to the verses "Caterina to Camoens," which had greatly impressed me before I became personally acquainted with their writer whose condition in certain respects had, at one time or so I fancied, resembled those of the Portuguese Caterina. Now don't you owe me something for this? If a certain autograph was only half paid by a hug what does this deserve? . . . but I shall leave it to your generosity. Give my love to dear Nellie, and keep safe what I have given you long ago being ever affectionately yours ROBERT BROWNING.

Never had short book a longer list of irate attacks than that of the unlucky Ingram. At least it is to his credit that he is silent as to the hard dying tradition of that shuffling of the sonnets into the pocket of the poet when the crooked tower peeped in on their honeymoon at Pisa.

Browning's own explanation makes the ivory gates fly open with the true fairy touch of romance.

'Sweetest eyes were ever seen,' were always for him those of his 'lyric love half angel, and half bird.'

TO M.S.

ON HER COMING SOUTH IN WINTER.

You think that you came here to find the sun,
Its joy, its warmth, its strength, its moving shade—

It is not true!

For all such bright and holy things,
Fused into one,

A splendour of a thousand glories made
And borne on beauty's radiant wings,
Have come with you.

GEORGE LEVESON GOWER.

*HAPPY ENDING ?**OLBIA B.C. 220.*

BY NAOMI MITCHISON.

THE current of the river was bringing down great jagged pieces of sheet ice that swung into one another and jarred and thudded and smashed and broke up in the rocking salt water of the harbour ; some of them had twigs and pine cones stuck in them from the gods alone knew how far up in Scythia ; one or two, even, had sledge marks. They were a good deal thicker than they looked, but the thickness was all under water. Demeas sat on a pile of stripped and resin-smelling logs and watched them, instead of going to look for work. He had, however, still got five drachmas left in his purse between his father and himself, and starvation. So there wasn't any desperate hurry. And the sun was coming out with a will now, bright and hot. Soon it would be summer ; then they wouldn't have to pay so much for fuel ! One could almost, but not quite, take off one's thick cloak. He was looking at a merchant ship that had made fast to the quay beside him, a coaster that was coming round early to get the first markets, a squat, broad-bottomed creature with ten row-ports a side. The slaves were hauling up buckets of water to wash down her deck, for she had been carrying cattle. God, a chilly and mucky business !

Demeas wished very much that something would happen. If it didn't soon he would have to go off after to-day's job, carrying bales of stinking furs about again, he supposed—God, why hadn't he been bred up to a skilled trade instead of going to so many lectures ! Then one of the men who was washing the deck walked to the edge with a bucket and instead of dipping it walked overboard himself into the sea. He struck out at once, but then, apparently, stopped, and a large piece of ice came at him edge-on. Demeas dropped his cloak and dived cleverly into a clear patch after the man ; the water was so much colder than it had looked in the sunshine that it took his breath away completely, and it was the merest luck that he grabbed a handful of hair and pulled the man out from under a block of ice that had ridden quietly

and nicely over him. He swam extremely hard away from the ice, pulling the man after him in jerks, and got to a ladder up on to the jetty on the other side, where a sailor helped him to haul out the thing he had saved ; his own hands were numb and burning with cold. However, someone had brought round his cloak, so he pulled off his wet things and huddled himself quickly into the warm wool.

The man was unconscious, not drowned—he could only have swallowed a few mouthfuls of water, and when they emptied out his throat he could breathe—but the ice had knocked him on the head and he was bleeding fast. Another young man, one of Demeas' many acquaintances, turned up and helped with the wound and produced another cloak. They saw the ship's captain coming along to reclaim his property ; Demeas said he hoped he'd get something a bit solider than thanks out of him !

'I doubt it,' said his friend ; 'that man's a real tough, a Marob man and a proper barbarian. I should think,' he went on, prodding the wet slave with the toe of his shoe, 'that this poor devil jumped overboard to get away from him. He's got a decent face.'

Demeas looked at the man a little more carefully : 'Could he be a Hellene ?'

'He might,' the other said, 'these days. That captain's got a nasty way of kicking them ; I suppose this one will be for it when he comes to.' He smiled a little, because he rather liked ironic ideas, as that was. They fitted in with the world.

'Mm,' said Demeas, and stooped quickly. 'You back me up !' He undid the end of the rag round the man's head and smeared a good lot of blood into his ears and nostrils. 'The captain's drunk enough for me to chance it.' He hugged himself up in his cloak, still pretty cold. The captain came wallowing up ; it was early in the day to be so drunk, but the market was not till to-morrow. 'No good,' said Demeas apologetically, 'he's done for.'

'Why, he's breathing !' said the captain with a smelly laugh. 'You don't know us sailors, you don't. Takes more than that to drown us.'

'He's smashed in his skull,' said Demeas, 'the bone's loose. I didn't even finish tieing it up ! He's bleeding from the ears—that's a sure sign.'

The captain made an ugly face and lived up to his reputation by kicking the man in the groin. 'Thirty drachs I gave for him in Abdera,' he said pathetically, 'the dirty bastard, falling over—'

board in harbour as if he was a baby ! ' He verified the bleeding at the ears, but seemed uninclined to leave. Demeas murmured something about his having done his best at great personal inconvenience ; the captain produced a few thanks but nothing more tangible. Demeas' friend, suddenly discovering that he was a surgeon, gave the man three hours, which seemed a plausible time. ' Hell ! ' said the captain, ' what am I to do, a poor man like me ? '

Demeas produced two of his drachmas, with the air of a fine gentleman. ' I'll give you that for him, considering I fished him out ! Do for a drink, what ? '

' All very well for you,' said the captain, ' with money to throw about—' Then he got rather muddled as to what he meant and took the money, spat in the man's face, and turned and humped himself away.

' No,' said Demeas, ' I don't feel at all dishonest. But I suppose he is going to live ? How am I to get him home ? Here — for his friend was beginning to drift off—' don't start telling everyone till that ship's sailed. Yes, you can have your cloak back to-morrow. But what the devil I'm to do—'

' God knows,' said the other one gently, over his shoulder.

First of all, Demeas spread his own tunic out in the sun to dry, and then he thought he might as well do the same for his new property, so he pulled off his canvas shirt and trousers—the man was dressed barbarian fashion—and was rather horrified to find how cold he was. Reluctantly he took off one of the two warm cloaks and wrapped it round the slave's body. Then he sat down again as much as possible in the sun and went on watching the ice ; at any rate this stopped him being a fur porter ! After a time he saw that the man's eyes were open and staring at him. He put on his own clothes which were now dryish. ' Come on ! ' he said, and heaved the man on to his feet ; he rocked and gave at the joints a good deal and held on to his head with both hands as if he were afraid it would come off. Demeas hitched the cloak over him, picked up the other things and hurried him as fast as he dared till they were out of sight of the ship. They got to the right street and the house, and so, with much hauling up the stairs, into the loft.

But, when his senses gradually cleared, Aglaos had forgotten most of this. He did not even remember the fall into the water and the way he had struck out instinctively before he could stop himself. The last thing he remembered at all was looking out at

the jarring and splintering of the ice-blocks from the deck of the ship and thinking what a good way it would be. After that there were some dimmish voices and a good deal of pain and effort and sickness. Then a slow realisation that he was awake and listening to an argument, and, if he did not move his head, it did not hurt him. The argument was, appropriately enough, about suicide ; he wondered for some time how he had got home. Had he had bad dreams lasting for three years ? The older voice, whom he visualised for some reason as his father, till he remembered that his father was dead, was defending the business of killing oneself with all the proper Stoic arguments. The younger seemed to be defending himself, rather crossly. It gradually occurred to Aglaos that the younger one must have fished him out from between the ice-blocks and so prevented him from doing what he had meant to do. He agreed with the elder one ! On the other hand, a good Stoic would not have done it on the spur of the moment and simply as an escape, a relief from misery. He must explain that, go into the argument himself. Very slowly he turned his head so that he was facing the room.

He seemed to be looking at it from below. Ah, now he understood, he was lying on the floor. The room was very low at one side, and the window was on his own level, with a view of tiles ; for some time he lost the argument in counting tiles. But the roof of the room, naked under more red tiles, sloped up to a plaster wall at the other side, on which someone had made mathematical drawings in red and black. There was a pot of charcoal in the middle, and the two arguers were on stools at each side, leaning over it, warming their hands. He was cold too, and what odd pains he had in his body ! There was a chest, a couple of mattresses with blankets tangled up on them, a cooking-pot on its side, a few jars and dishes, one of a pair of shoes : it worried him that he could not see the second shoe. He said : ' I do not think I can blame anyone for stopping me, for I was not giving myself death as a good Stoic would have, after considering that all other courses would lead him away from freedom, but because I was already unfree. I was bound by pain and—and—' He was after all finding it difficult to speak.

The elder man looked down, frowning at him across the charcoal pot, and said : ' I suppose from that you claim to be a Stoic ? '

' Yes,' said Aglaos, ' I suppose I do.'

' You appear to have been a very bad one,' said the elder man.

Aglaos found he could now move a little more. He said : 'Zeno himself would have been hard put to it to lead the good life on that ship.'

'Pytheas was a slave at one time. During those years he was accumulating material for his Dialectics.'

'Yes. I've heard him lecture. But he was in a decent house with a good master when—when— Oh father Zeus !' cried Aglaos, '*where is that ship ?*' He shoved himself half-way up on his elbows and looked round, because he suddenly felt very dizzy, as if he was going to wake and find himself—there.

The younger man was over beside him in two steps, with an arm under his head : 'Ssh ! Lie down. You won't ever see that ship again if you're sensible.'

'Why not ?'

'Because I made the captain think you were dying and bought you off him for two drachs.'

Aglaos reflected. 'The captain must have been drunk.'

'He was.'

'He often is. Then he's worst. But now—I belong to you ?'

'Yes, stupid. What's your name ? Aglaos ? I didn't even know you were a Hellene when I jumped in after you. I'm Demeas son of Timoklides. That's my father. He likes arguing better than anything in the world. I don't. You mustn't start arguing with him now. Go to sleep.'

And apparently Aglaos did what his new master told him, for nothing more seemed to happen, except that he got much warmer, so someone must have put a blanket over him, until the next morning when he woke again, very thirsty but only with a little headache. Demeas had just re-lighted the charcoal stove and was standing back observing it, very much pleased with himself. As he turned away, Aglaos sat up. 'Oh, you're awake again, are you !' Demeas said. 'Better ? That's right. Now listen. I'm going out to work. You'll have to do that too, but not till the ship's sailed. To-day you can tidy up the room ; it looks as if it needed it. And keep the stove alight. Can you stay on your feet ?'

Aglaos got up, holding to the wall, and found it was not so very difficult. But he was lame and sore from the captain's parting kick. 'May I get some water ?' he said.

'You oughtn't to be thirsty after the ducking you had ! Still, here you are. It's about all you'll get too. If you find anything to eat in the room you're welcome to eat it. There very likely

is some bread somewhere ; it gets all over the place. However, if you're a Stoic, little things like that won't matter, will they ? I wish I was ! ' He pulled down the canvas shirt and trousers and tossed them over to Aglaos, who failed to catch them. ' You might put on your own clothes again. What you're wearing now is my only decent tunic. Thanks, yes. By the way, if Boa comes for the rent, tell her I've got a wonderful job and I've bought you with the proceeds. She's quite an old dear, a Paphlagonian or something, you know, but she does insist rather much on being paid. Go down and talk to her if you like. Father won't be back till late, and I don't suppose I shall.' He collected his own tunic from Aglaos : ' Not lousy ? Splendid ! But I should cut my hair some time if I were you. Father goes to his pupils all day and gets his meals with them. The worst of it is, he's always been terribly fussy about not being paid, and he won't be paid still ! Otherwise I could live on him nicely. Well, good-bye, Aglaos. If you run away the captain'll get you, so don't.'

Aglaos gradually tidied the room, found some very stale barley bread, which he ate, and washed all the dishes and cups, most of which wanted it badly. It was marvellous being alone again, out of hearing of the others squabbling and snoring and spitting, and screaming when they were suddenly kicked or hit. It was so soft, so delicious to be alone ! Able to think. He would be alone now for hours, and then the other two would come back and find how different the room looked and be pleased with him. His headache was almost gone.

In the afternoon he explored downstairs. Their room was a loft up steep steps from the main room of the house. It was all very well Demeas saying to keep in the fire, but there wasn't much charcoal. He wondered if he could come across any down there. He arrived at a kitchen, but there was not much chance of getting any, as the landlady was cooking, and several children were there too and getting very much in her way. She was not a very encouraging lady, but it was wonderful to realise that however much she barked she could not bite him ! She did not appear to believe his story of Demeas and the excellent job. However, he played houses with the children and kept them quiet for her, so that she was quite friendly by the end. When she went out with the elder ones, leaving him in charge of the youngest, who was obviously too small to notice or tell, he collected two or three pieces of her charcoal. Demeas came back tired and rather cross with a hare

and some onions for supper. Neither of them had ever skinned a hare, so it was not so satisfactory as it might have been. Still, Demeas was much pleased that Boa had taken to him. 'I played with her children,' said Aglaos.

'I'm not good at playing with children,' said Demeas, 'they always spoil my games!'

Aglaos said: 'I like them.' He was putting the pot with the rest of the hare into a corner to keep for to-morrow.

Demeas said very quickly: 'Did you have children?'

Aglaos gasped a little at this sudden ducking into the past. He said, 'I had a small baby.'

'Where?'

'At home. In Mantinea.'

'You're a Mantinean, are you? That was a foul business.' But Aglaos suddenly found his head and body aching unbearably again; the room swung about. He just heard Demeas say: 'Lie down now or father'll make you argue with him all night.' And then he must have slept at once, and slept deeply, his mind taking this refuge from the pain of remembrance which it was menaced by.

Three days later, the ship having sailed, he and Demeas went off together to work. Demeas had a job of sorts with a fur merchant, sorting and packing and carrying about the skins that were brought in from the forests by various savages who liked to be paid in bar metal or else in kind with oil, wine and sweet foods—paste of dates and almonds—or else in the coarsely and thickly embroidered linens that were made for the barbarian market. He thought they would take on Aglaos too. If so he would get the wages and would either be able to live in luxury (anyway, be able to pay his rent and have enough food and drink to ask his friends to supper), or else he would live as now but would not have to work himself. Either possibility had its points. He said suddenly: 'It must have been a bad business at Mantinea.'

'It was,' said Aglaos.

'What happened? You'd much better tell me. It's all in your head, I suppose, now I've started you, and you must get it out.'

'Very well,' said Aglaos. For a little time he walked along slowly, for he was still very stiff, saying nothing. He seemed to be getting it all together. At last he said: 'You know what happened at the beginning? We sided with Sparta and King Kleomenes. That was, I think, right, but it was not so right that

some of us should have shown it by killing all the Achæans in the town. However, these things happen. I had friends in Sparta, of the King's party ; they told me how things were going, how Kleomenes was coming to help the poor all over Greece, those who had debts and no land. When he had finished with Aratos and the Achæan League he would go round the cities, dividing up the land and cancelling debts. We were not rich ourselves, but yet not poor. It was not for our advantage as a family. Yet it seemed to me that if this revolution happened in Mantinea, it might save us from a worse one. It was better for the poor to be helped reasonably by Kleomenes than to get to the point of despair where they would help themselves unreasonably. So we were prepared, most of us, to take it gladly. But then Aratos sold the Achæan League to Antigonos of Macedonia for his help against Sparta.'

'I know ; it was Antigonos who took your city.'

'I am not sure if it was he or Aratos who revenged those Achæan settlers on us. We knew something would happen about that. Some of those who had done it escaped, others were seized and killed at once without trial. We had to accept that. After the end of the siege it was very, very quiet in Mantinea—quiet for us, I mean. They were gay enough ! We kept in our houses, only going out perhaps in the early morning, hurriedly, to get food. We could not let our women folk go out at all. Some quarters had been burnt during the siege and we were lodging householders from there. Besides that, of course, we had soldiers billeted on us, Achæans and Macedonians, and had to feed and look after them well. The ones in our house seemed decent enough ; they joked with the slave girls, who didn't mind ; but they had not even seen my wife or the two women—one was a cousin of mine—from the burnt quarters. They kept close in their rooms and I think only talked in whispers.'

'Were you long married ?'

'Rather more than a year,' said Aglaos. 'I am trying to tell this as though it had happened to someone else, or long, long ago, in Troy time. She was the daughter of our friends and neighbours. You know how it is in a City ; one lives very close, generation after generation. We'd played together as children. I knew her father and brother well ; the brother had been wounded, fighting on the wall. I had been so happy with her that now I just cannot remember it at all as it was. We had a baby.'

'A son ?'

'Yes, yes, everything one wanted ! During the siege and those two days afterwards we told one another, she and I, that these bad times would pass. Even if in the end we were left quite poor, we would work for one another ; we would still keep our books and our friends. Even if we had no cakes nor wine for them, no cushions, no pretty toys to amuse them with, we'd still have spring water and violets and nightingales, and the talk would go on just the same. She cared for that, you see ; it might have been better for her if she hadn't. She had read nearly as much as I had ; I took her with me to lectures sometimes. And then— The first I knew was that the men who were billeted on us came back at noon shouting and laughing ; I thought they were drunk already and I went to meet them, for I was afraid they might break something more. When they saw me the leader of them stopped laughing, but he grinned and said : "Bring along your women now, my man, for I'm going to make my choice." I didn't answer back ; I stepped aside and said nothing ; I thought he had just turned nasty for the moment. Then one of the others said : "He hasn't heard the news !" So they told me.'

'You were all separated, weren't you ?—the men to Macedonia, the women and children to be sold to the new colonists ? One sees why they did that, but— Go on, Aglaos.'

'I didn't believe it, so they told me to get proof and then come back. I went out into the street and up towards the market-place. I found it was true. About twenty of us, I among them, tried to get to Aratos and appeal to him personally. We never got near him—if he was still in the town at all. No one else we saw listened for one moment. One or two seemed ashamed, but most just cursed and laughed and had us kicked out. I met my brother-in-law and asked him to come back to the house with me. So he did, and we slipped in and through to the women's rooms without the soldiers seeing us. I dreaded most terribly telling my wife. But there was no need to ; she knew. Her mother was there ; she'd done some things up in a bundle and just walked across the town, in the state it was : a stout old woman. "I'll stick by my girl as long as I can," she said, and then she said very little more, but sat there with her lips pressed up and a grip on her bundle. My own mother was dead and I had no sister.'

'My wife came to me and took my hands. She said : "If this is the last time, dear heart, we will not spoil it." She put her

arms round my neck and kissed me ; we stayed so for a few minutes. We let one another go and sat down side by side, very close. She said : " I have been thinking of all the books we have read together and the stories of good men. Do we kill ourselves now ? " I think we were both trembling a good deal ; I could not answer. Her brother said : " You cannot, because of your baby." She said : " I have been thinking of that. In the books it is always a man who is wise." One of the other women—my cousin—said what I suppose was in all our minds : " Is it better for them to live and be slaves ? " She looked towards the children ; she had rather an older one of her own. Our baby was awake and moving his hands about, as they do. My wife said : " Oh, I can't kill him ! " And for the first time she began to cry. I made up my mind ; I said : " There's no question of that. We will live through this and keep our souls free and our children's souls." My brother-in-law said : " I think you are right. If we are good Stoicks we can do this." My wife said : " It will be easier for you." I said : " I know. It will be twice as difficult for you. You will have two souls to keep straight, your own and my son's."

" I don't remember everything we said after that. We had, I suppose, about an hour together. The husband of one of the other women managed to get to us too. I remember suddenly that my wife began laughing and then she said : " I had forgotten for the moment that this was really happening to us. I was thinking it was something we had made up to test our minds." (For we had often discussed what the lover of good would do in one or another position.) Then she shook a good deal and said : " Is it really true ? " I said : " As true as these things ever are. But not deeply true, only an appearance. Under that we are all calm and secure and part of Goodness and Life. We are in one universe with the stars and the hills and one another ; nothing can separate us. It is a spiritual universe and cannot be shattered by material disasters." I believed that then and spoke as if I did. I think it was some comfort for us all.

" I remember saying to my wife that I wished she were an ordinary woman to whom these things that must come to her would mean less pain, and she said no, it was better to have great pain but keep one's mind bright, and she said that, though there was half the world between us, she and I would often be thinking of the same kind of ideas at the same time. She talked to her brother too, asking him if he remembered things they had done together as

children ; we all talked, breathlessly, trying to say everything for a life-time in those few minutes. Part of the time I took her on my knees while she held our baby, and we just whispered each other's names over and over. We tried to make some plan for the future too. I said I would come back to Mantinea and find her again, and, whatever had happened, to either of us, I would get her back. I said she must teach my child to look forward to that. I asked her if I should try in the time left us to get some decent man to promise to buy her. But I think she realised how little chance of that there was, and told me to stay. She said it would be better for me if I did not know who her master was to be. She had always been kind to me and perhaps this was the kindest thing she ever did. For now, when I am hopeful, I can imagine she was bought by some older man who would treat her and our son honourably for the sake of the gods.

'At the end of the hour a good many soldiers came, as well as those who were billeted in our house. They went through all the rooms, putting together anything that was valuable and seeing that no one was hiding. Their captain said to us : "Time's up," but he gave my brother-in-law and me one moment more to say good-bye. Then we were chained. My wife had been standing very steady and silent and smiling, but when she saw me chained she suddenly tried to run to me. But one of the soldiers barred her way with a spear.'

'And then ?'

'Then we were marched north to Macedonia, and any who were old or badly wounded died, unless they had the luck to be taken in by people on the way. A few of us were rescued by friends in towns we passed through, for no one liked the look of us being beaten on by Macedonians, but sometimes they refused to sell—their orders were to bring us up out of Greece. Then we were sold in gangs. My brother-in-law and I were together for some time ; I was able to help him—his wound did not heal well—and we could talk. But by and bye the gangs were broken up, at least ours was. I was sold to the captain of that ship ; he'd got to Abdera short-handed one voyage, worse luck for me. They said he'd kicked the last man to death. I think that was probably not true. I wished I had ever been taught a skilled trade ; but of course I had not been. Reading and writing were no help—unless one were sold to the barbarians, to Rome or one of those outer towns. But perhaps anything was better than that. I know it must have happened

to some of us, any who had special skill at doctoring or writing quickly in a good hand, or mathematics, or dialectic even. They were shipped off to Delos and from that terrible place to Rome or Carthage or beyond.'

They had nearly come to their fur-trader's warehouse. Demeas sat down on the wall of a well and began to re-lace his shoe. On the ground, where the shadows of the houses came, there was still a dirty hardness of trampled snow and ice, but the well-water was dark and unfrozen. He was thinking aloud : ' Yes, we could both do with a skilled trade ! If I learnt one while you did this job ? One's father might have considered what the world was going to be like. . . . Aglaos, if you could still remember that last day and the things you said to your wife, you had no business to try and kill yourself.'

' I know,' said Aglaos, ' and now I'm ashamed. But I'd said that to myself month after month and there seemed no chance at all of my being able to do anything about it ever. Until, from being a hope and a comfort, it came to being torture. And in winter there were these long black nights up here when I couldn't sleep for cold and memories. They wore me out ; I've had nearly three years of it. I know very well that I'm not as brave as I thought or hoped I was.'

Demeas said : ' But do you still want to go back to Mantinea ? You may find all sorts of things there worse than you imagine. Your wife may have been sold outside the city now. Your son may be dead.'

' Don't think I haven't imagined all that ! The chances are against her being sold into another place, but it may have happened all the same. And I know it's hard for a slave woman to keep a young baby. Her master and mistress may say—— Yes, Demeas, I've thought of all that.'

' Your wife may have other children. She may have found a master who's set her free and is keeping her better than you'll ever be able to after this ; she mayn't have any welcome for you.'

' I doubt that, but I know it's possible. I know it is very likely that she has been through all kinds of shame and that her soul was broken by it, as mine was. I know everything may be finished.'

' What would you do, even ? Your city has lost her name. She's not lovely Mantinea any more, but Antigonea, named after

her conqueror, not a free city ever any more, Aglaos ! You've no home in Antigonea.'

' I know that too. The only thing about it is that it's the name of a dead man now. The gods closed their hands on him at last. But I do think, though your father might not agree with me, that I could be a good enough Stoic to face the worst, now that you've given me this breathing-space to get myself disentangled.' He stood in front of Demeas and looked at him twice and began to speak and checked himself and at last said : ' Does this mean that you will let me earn my freedom and go ? '

' Oh, I suppose so, I suppose so,' said Demeas, ' though it's very annoying, because otherwise I could have lived on you all my life, and besides you could have argued with father instead of me. I'll set you a good stiff price, mind ! You can't go off to-morrow. Still, you'll probably work harder than I do, so they'll pay you better. My dear Aglaos, I do beg of you not to go kissing my hand in the middle of the street ! What else could I decently have done ? '

RADIUM—UNTAPPED EMPIRE SOURCES.

WHEN just over thirty years ago the famous French scientists Monsieur and Madame Curie, while experimenting with some pitchblende ore sent them from the little mining town of Joachimstal in Austria, succeeded in separating from that ore two new elements which they named Polonium and Radium, they made what is probably the greatest discovery of modern times.

The seemingly magical properties of radium amazed its discoverers and startled the world into the belief that something new under the sun had actually been discovered. That belief grew and soon revolutionised progressive thought, and to-day, while the interest is still sustained among the general public, the physicists are becoming even more amazed as new possibilities of radium continue to suggest themselves. To enumerate the known uses of radium would be futile, as there is not enough of this magic-working mineral at the world's present command to allow of its being applied to more than a few of those uses. Briefly, however, it may be said that the discovery of radium has opened up new fields in science and pushed back the invisible boundary line which, to human intelligence, separates the knowable from the unknowable. How much further it may yet enable Man to pierce the mysteries of his environment is a subject of present thought among men of science, but the brain of the ordinary mortal becomes paralysed in the mere contemplation.

The fact that the British Medical Conference has announced that the application of radium has been proved to be a cure for cancer in most of its forms should go far to indicate some of the potentialities of the strange mineral salt (radium does not exist except in the form of a bromide, chloride or sulphide), but at the moment both scarcity and the price forbid all experiment.

When the Austrian Government became aware of the Curies' discovery in 1898 it promptly instituted a monopoly of the pitchblende ore (uranium oxide) found in the vicinity of Joachimstal, and the price of a gramme (15·4 grains) of the radium salt extracted was somewhere in the neighbourhood of £50,000, thus making it more valuable than diamonds, rubies, pearls or gold—or anything else on earth.

But the Joachimstal works could only produce about one gramme per year, and over one thousand tons of crude ore had to be treated to obtain this amount. It was known, however, that other countries contained pitchblende, and a search resulted in that ore of uranium oxide being found in Cornwall, Belgium, Portugal, Mexico, the West Indies and in America ; but the poorness of the ores found necessitated a prohibitive cost of treatment, and soon Austria was allowed to retain her monopoly. This she did for more than ten years. America, however, had already sensed the importance of possessing a radium source of her own and she offered inducement to prospectors to continue the search for ores containing that element. And, roaming the waterless deserts of Utah and Colorado, those daring men found a strange ore—now known as Carnotite—which exhibited all the signs of radio-activity. A picked trial parcel of twelve hundred tons of this ore was sent to France for treatment in the year 1912 and from this was returned almost nine grammes of radium, thus doubling the world's stock then existing.

This achievement at once made America the chief source of the world's supply, and that country lost no time in taking full advantage of her position. Elaborate extraction works were built and a Government monopoly instituted, and, until a few years ago, she charged the world a hundred thousand dollars per gramme for any radium she sold.

But events were happening elsewhere too. Just before the Great War some British and Belgian prospectors, searching for copper and other base metal ores in the Katanga Division of the Belgian Congo, found small veins of a mysterious mineral permeating reefs of both copper and lead formations. The presence of this unknown substance in the copper ores annoyed them greatly, because it somehow affected the simple assays they made to determine the value of the copper contents and prevented them from being able to tell the true worth of their find. Soon, most prospectors became so exasperated at the sight of those minute veins that they passed on hurriedly when they noticed their occurrence, and, in time, most of those men were enlisted in the service of the great mining company of Central Africa, the *Union Minière du Haut Katanga*.

This big company, with which is closely allied the British company known as Tanganyika Concessions, was erecting smelters, building railways, and generally preparing to develop the most

extensive mineral belt known in the world, and the finest chemists and mineralogists of Belgium, Britain and France were on its staff in the new town, named Elizabethville, springing up on the borders of Northern Rhodesia and the Belgian Congo. One of those men, a Belgian, was assaying a sample of ore handed him by an old prospector who was now employed by the big company and who was now watching the famous assayer with great interest.

'Where does this ore come from?' the Belgian enquired. 'It is very complex but it carries thirty-one per cent. copper and—'

'Hold on there, old man!' exclaimed the prospector. 'That specimen came from near Kambove. I know the stuff too darned well. Big Jack and I could only get it to go about nine per cent. in our old assays.'

'Ah!' smiled the Belgian, 'but if your assay was the usual volumetric or colour test the presence of uranium oxide would cheat you—'

'Uranium oxide! What is that?'

'Pitchblende, the ore that carries radium. Radium is worth a lot of money, you know—oh! It came from Kambove, did you say? Wait till I see Monsieur J—.' The assayer ran out of the laboratory and talked excitedly to a manager who was passing, and the astonished prospector, who was a one-time friend of the present writer, wondered what had happened. He knew, when the famous manager interviewed him, a few minutes later.

The assay staff of the company worked all that sultry night, experimenting with the rich copper ore from Kambove, and in the morning it was known in Elizabethville that that ore carried radium equal to ten grammes per thousand tons! The news was cabled to Belgium, and instructions were received back to the effect that full investigations must be made before any announcement was made to the world. The excitement now became intense and quickly spread southwards into Northern Rhodesia; but, a severe epidemic of sleeping sickness breaking out among the natives of the Haut Katanga just then, labour was almost un procurable, and further prospecting was suspended.

While the mysterious disease was still raging the Great War broke out, and practically every white man in the Congo region, British and Belgian, seized his rifle and joined up in an army to assist the small British force then in danger of annihilation in German East Africa.

When the war was over Belgium announced the great Congo

discovery to the world, and the old prospectors, now all managers of some kind in the big company, went out themselves, and in the mountains of the Congo and Zambesi divide again mined the ore they had at first detested, and, when selected parcels were carried by natives, into Elizabethville, assays proved the ore to be worth a thousand pounds per ton. This ore being too precious to be treated at any of the great smelting works already in Katanga, Belgium began erecting a huge scientific treatment plant at home at Oolen, and the valuable pitchblende formation, now mined by the natives, was, after being picked by hand, sent home to that town, over motor roadways and rail across Africa to Beira on the east coast, and even to Benguella on the west, whence the ore was shipped. This precious freight is now guarded night and day while in Belgian territory, but that which in course of transit comes down over the Rhodesian railways comes in ordinary trucks as if it were ordinary copper ore from the Union Minière mines.

In 1922 the Oolen works began producing and by 1924 a hundred grammes had been given to the world. The total production of America up to that time had been only one hundred and sixty grammes and, as the Oolen works equalled that amount in 1925 alone, the control of the world's supply of radium promptly passed to Belgium. Belgium at once reduced the price to £12,000 per gramme and, recently, she again brought the price down so that to-day the price of one gramme of radium salt is in the region of £10,000. According to calculations there is not yet an ounce more than one pound weight of radium in existence, the total value of which is somewhere around five million pounds.

But even although a National Radium Fund has been subscribed in Britain for the purchase of radium for the cure of cancer and other purposes, the price of £10,000 per gramme is utterly beyond reason and, being largely due to the present monopoly held by the Belgians, will not likely be tolerated by Britain when the people of that country realise that vast stores of radium ores lie neglected within the British Empire. Those radium-carrying formations are already well known to some prospectors, and any of them could go to-day direct to some parts of Australia where great reefs of ironstone impregnated with veins of xenotime, yttrium and uranium—all radium-bearing—exist. But those reefs are to-day passed by in disgust by all who see them. To most they mean nothing more than barren ironstone ridges, and the few who know that they carry pitchblende, autonite, carnotite or any other uranium oxide

ore also know that they cannot separate from those hidden ores the element they contain which is more valuable than gold or gems. Of what value to them is a mountain or reef from which they can extract nothing? Even if they could transport it in bulk to the nearest railway it would still be valueless to them because there are at present no reduction plants in Australia which could extract radium, and of necessity the entire reef formations would require to be broken up and sent across the world to Europe or America for treatment. Such a proceeding would not appeal to any prospector the writer knows, and therefore, until the British or Australian Government, or some wealthy syndicate, erects scientific treatment works like those at Oolen in Belgium somewhere within reach of the spot, the incalculable wealth of radium in Australia will in all probability continue to remain where it has lain since time began.

The country to the east and north of the Flinders Range in South Australia carries reefs of radio-active ores throughout a wide area. This was discovered when prospectors looking for silver and lead, and hoping to strike a second Broken Hill, sunk pot-holes at widely divergent points throughout the region. They found both silver and lead in payable quantities, but their work being impeded by the intrusion of some dark-grey ore which they did not know but which rendered it impossible for them to ascertain a true assay value of those metals, they soon abandoned the district. Government analysts have since discovered that the intruding ore was a form of pitchblende abnormally rich in radium. Mount Painter is the name of the place from which the analysts procured their samples, but that mountain is by no means the spot to which the writer would go were he commissioned to find radium.

Hundreds of miles nor'-easterly from the Flinders Range country, towards the Queensland border, is an immense tract of dead scrub land throughout which miles of ironstone-like reefs outcrop everywhere in bewildering confusion. The surface sand of this region carries gold in very fine grains, and some prospectors go there to dry-blow the sand for this gold when fortune has gone against them elsewhere. Few men have done more than look at the great brown reefs around them, but the writer once knapped about a dozen samples from their caps and took them to Sydney, a long time later, for analysis. They proved to be carrying autonite, and this, upon further reduction, yielded a radium bromide equal to one twentieth of a grain per ton (nearly three and a half grammes to

res
ns.
can
the
ere
act
ire
ica
os-
ra-
ific
thin
alia
nce

in
ide
and
at
oth
ded
how
say
ern-
as a
er is
their
the

try,
rub
ery-
tion
e to
hem
own
zen
ime
his,
one
s to



the thousand tons). The writer was on the eve of sailing for New Guinea when the assay returns were made known, but even had he known the value of radium at the time he would not have gone back to the desolate reefs which provided him with the assay specimens. They have never been touched since.

It is well known to most West Australian prospectors, too, that the Glenelg Hills, the remnant ridges of a time-old mountain chain about a hundred miles south of the town of Southern Cross in West Australia, also carry radio-active ores in decomposed reef formations. They are believed to be all that is left of a mighty range that stood alone in the great southern ocean before Australia was formed, and the desert sand surrounding them is supposed to be the dust which unknown ages have weathered from them. At any rate, that sand is rich in flour gold and the reefs which shed it are still visible in the yet standing rock-remnants. Many men go out to the Glenelgs in the hope of replenishing their fortunes, and although all now know that a treasure, far more valuable than the gold they dolly out of the old rocks, lies hidden in some mysterious way in the material they discard, they are not interested. They know that they cannot extract it without an expensive plant, and that knowledge puts radium beyond their consideration.

'Yes, radium is here all right,' an old miner said to the writer, 'but it's like the gold said to be in the water of the ocean, we can't take it out.'

'But surely we could do what the Americans and Belgians are doing?' I reasoned.

'Maybe; if we had enough money to try, but if I had that I'd rather pitch my old tent on the bank of a flowing stream and try to grow cabbages than put in my time out in this dead bit of the world trying.' To anyone who knows the Glenelg ridges Old Tom's philosophy will not appear very strange.

In Nor'-West Australia, in the Pilbara Division, is another range of mountains carrying radio-active ores said to be as rich as those of the Congo headwaters, and on the Arltunga goldfield in Central Australia are many great 'blows' of arsenical ironstone through which run veins of autonite which, according to the assays made by the writer's comrade at the time, a distinguished scientist, are phenomenally rich in radium. The writer has also crossed ridges in New Guinea, near the scene of the late gold rush, which showed unmistakable signs of great radio-activity, but he took no assays, gold being his sole object in view at the time.

Since the writer's last return home to Britain radium has become in world-wide demand and a British Commission has been appointed to search the Empire for the ores containing it. The following therefore may be of interest to any contemplating a radium quest. It is a re-visualisation of some happenings on a comparatively recent prospecting trip and, as more knowledge regarding the treatment of radium-containing ores is now available, the writer himself may return to the scene.

Radium was not in my thoughts nor did I know very much about that substance one afternoon as we sat on an outcropping reef of copper carbonate and gazed at the heap of twisted iron, wheels and other things that had but recently formed a motor tractor. We were somewhere in the vicinity of the 21st south parallel, between the meridians of 136° and 137° , and as far as we knew, hundreds of miles from anywhere. We were prospectors and had been trying to force an overland track from railhead at Oodnadatta in South Australia, via Alice Springs in Central Australia, to Cloncurry in north Queensland. Former experiences on the fringes of the great central desert of Australia had led us to believe that vast stores of mineral wealth lay just beyond our farthest journeys from the Queensland side, and we had several times decided to try to reach them from South Australia—'some day.'

That indefinite 'some day' had at last arrived, and the use of a motor tractor had made the attempt possible. But we five men were all that could be mustered of the comrades of former days; the others had become scattered all over the earth. We consisted of the Professor (a famous explorer and scientist), Mac (the hero of many world adventures), Wolfram Dick (a well-known Australian prospector who could only speak the truth by accident), the Poet (an old comrade of the Opal Fields and West Australia), and myself (better known by another appellation).

We were no longer the irresponsible young men who, oftener than not, sported black skins and frizzed hair when they went into the world's waste places in search of gold and gems, but only myself had spent any time in civilised cities since those days, and I was now discarding the acquired veneer almost as readily as I had washed the dye from my skin, in New Guinea.

'Well, gentlemen,' remarked the Professor, ruefully, 'we seem to have fallen into a bad hole, this time. Isn't it remarkable that

we have come so far through the heart of Australia, without accident, to fall into an extinct volcanic blow-hole ?'

' I think it is more remarkable that none of us are hurt, Professor,' I said, ' but I see that your priceless assaying plant is ruined and that nitric acid is spilling itself over your maps and charts.'

' I never believed in travelling on anything that hadn't feet,' put in Wolfram Dick. ' A horse would have known this funny old hole was here, but I couldn't see it until I drove our tram-car right into it.'

' What's the use of crying over spilt acid or tins of condensed milk ?' said Mac. ' If that range looming through the heat haze just ahead is the divide between north and south-flowing waters, that channel beside us on our right must feed into the Rankine River when there's any water in it, and, if so, we cannot have much more than a hundred miles or so to walk to reach the Queensland border. There are some cattle stations just over the line and we can get horses at the first we strike—if it is no' deserted.'

The Professor drew some lines in the sand at his feet to represent State borders and known mountain ranges and, after studying them for a full minute, signified that Mac was correct in his calculations as to our position. But we were not cheered by the knowledge ; the country around us was parched and the gaunt, shadeless scrub was almost barren of bird life, ominous signs of a drought-stricken land in which no man could live long enough to walk a hundred miles.

' What do you think about things, Poet ?' Wolfram Dick inquired of that individual.

' We'll not now be able to hear how the cricket match is going in Melbourne,' was the Poet's only answer.

The Professor walked over to an outcropping reef near and examined it. ' After all,' he called out, ' we came out on this expedition to look for mineral wealth and I think we have found it. This reef here is rich in wolfram and I am sure there is about a thousand ounces of silver to the ton in that galena blow behind us. There is also some other peculiar element in it and in that copper carbonate you are sitting on, but until I can put an assay through I can't say whether it is thorium, uranium, vanadium or zirconium—'

' Does it matter much ?' I laughed. ' We can't eat it or drink it, no matter what it is, and anyhow, I have seen the same kind

of stuff down at Mount Painter and near Broken Hill, and we've all seen it over in West Australia.'

'Yes, I know that various forms of uranium oxide exist down south and over in W.A.,' the Professor agreed, 'but nothing quite so rich as is in those formations around here. But let's get some sort of camp fixed and we'll discuss our plans after sundown.'

Our stores had not been greatly affected by the disaster that had overtaken us, and while the Poet and the Professor attended to the preparation of a meal, Mac and I took our prospecting picks and walked off to see the nature of the range of hills that stood out in front of us; Wolfram Dick electing to go down the water channel beside us which Mac thought led into the Rankine River, somewhere. Mac and I were not surprised to find the hills much nearer than they had at first seemed to be, being used to the phenomena of hills in the heart of Australia appearing to rise as if from out a mist cloud. They were dull grey in colour, barren of all vegetation, and their smooth worn slopes, which reared to a height of about 200 feet, were honeycombed with caverns, in which enormous lizards or iguanas very much resembling crocodiles, kangaroos, wallabies and great winged bats had made their homes, while snakes of all kinds lay coiled up in the sunlight at the entrances.

'I can't imagine what those rocks are made of,' Mac observed, as we entered one of the caves and flashed our electric torches. 'They are heavily mineralised and look to me to be similar in formation to the Glenelg ridges over in W.A.'

'I read in an Adelaide newspaper that the members of the World's Science Congress who visited the Glenelg ridges have given it as their opinion that those ridges are the oldest remnants of rock on the earth's surface,' I replied, 'and possibly this range of hills was once part of the same chain.'

'I shouldn't wonder,' grunted my companion, breaking off a fragment of the cave wall with his pick. 'This rock was certainly made a long time ago, but here is a bit that will be dissolved in the acids of the present when the Professor gets his hands on it.' He picked up the fallen piece. 'Hullo! It's lead—or something heavier!'

'I don't think I have ever seen any galena ore like that,' I said, examining the specimen in Mac's hands. 'See how that strange mineral the Professor doesn't know runs through it.'

Mac grinned and, dropping the piece of rock, stooped and rubbed the back of his right leg. 'If I werna o' Scottish ancestry

an' therefore no' inclined to be superstitious,' he said, unblushingly, 'I should say that the stone I have just dropped was living.'

From the facts that my comrade had reverted into dialect, and had unconsciously gone through the old familiar leg-rubbing performance—a habit of his, when excited, which would give him away, anywhere, under any disguise—I knew that his words had very little connection with his thoughts. 'What is in your mind, Mac?' I asked, now aware for the first time that an inexplicable sensation was permeating my being.

'I'm thinking we'd better get away from this uncanny place before we're fossilised. I feel as if my bones were being assayed in boiling nitric acid. Do you smell anything?'

'No, but likely some dead reptile is causing that phosphorescent glow at your feet.'

'You ken vera weel that it is the broken piece o' rock I dropped that is shining—an' just look at the place I broke it off from! It's like looking through a mica sight glass into a boiler furnace—'

'But there is neither furnace nor mica here, Mac,' I cried. 'We are gasping for air. We are being poisoned in an atmosphere of lead fumes! Let's get outside!'

'Watch!'

Mac picked up the gleaming fragment at his feet and flung it against the far end of the cave. Myriads of fire-like points flashed out where it struck and, instantly, a faint red light, like that from the dying embers of a fire, filled the apartment. Some reptiles wriggled over our feet and a few bats flapped past our heads, all making for the outside world. My nerves tingled as if I had received a slight electric shock but the sensation passed away as the strange glare faded out.

'Those rocks may be the confining walls of hell,' Mac shouted, 'but another piece is going back with us to camp.' He struck viciously at the wall again with his pick-head and, picking up the fallen dislodgements, we leaped towards the cave mouth.

When we got back to camp we had mastered the feelings that had affected us in the cave, having explained them away to our own satisfaction as having been largely imagination. The sun was still above the rim of the western plains and, while telling a very simple story of what we had seen, we assisted in setting out our evening meal in the smoke of the fire the Poet had prepared to ward off festive mosquitoes and other night pests. The Professor was not greatly impressed with either our story or our samples of

rock and, as the acid with which he treated a specimen had no effect beyond indicating that lead and iron were present, he deferred a complete assay and only remarked that the hills ahead of us evidently contained the mother lodes of the minerals we saw around us. Wolfram Dick returned just on sundown and reported that a deep water-hole, filled with queer fish that walked out on its banks, lay in the channel quite near us. He had brought in a couple of those large perch-like creatures, so we believed him, but when he added that he had seen signs of human presence in the shape of footprints in the sand around the water-hole, we laughed. We knew Dick.

After dining that evening we talked and smoked far into the night, making light of our stranded position when the conversation at any time veered round to it. We wondered what had happened to certain old comrades of former expeditions and why it had come about that we five, only, formed the present one. I had an idea that some of them might have got caught in the vortex of civilisation, as I had been, and that risky prospecting expeditions were therefore no longer of much attraction to them, but I did not express my thoughts. That night the stars of the tropics shone down on five men sleeping in the time-old heart of Australia as peacefully as if they were only a few miles distant from a railway, and when Wolfram Dick told us at sunrise that he had heard a horse-bell during the night we were all very rude to him!

After breakfast, we all went over to the shadowy mountains to explore the strange caves and, to the delight of Mac and myself, even the learned Professor was puzzled to explain the nature of their wall formations. When we stepped from the glare of the morning sun into one of the natural tunnels we seemed to enter another world, and I at once experienced the strange tingling sensation I had felt the previous afternoon. I was glad to note that my comrades also appeared to be affected to some extent, the bewildered expression on their faces showing that my own senses were not cheating me. The cave was not really dark, a faint glow emanating from the walls, which in some mysterious way became more luminous when struck with our picks, yielding sufficient light to enable us to see each other. I could not locate any particular source of the illumination, but concluded it issued from the minute veins of some mineral with which they were impregnated, and which, somehow, became incandescent with the vibrations caused by striking the walls. I noticed, too, that during

the periods when the luminosity was most intense, the walls appeared to be translucent and that the light-giving mineral veins seemed to be imbedded at some distance from the surface.

Judging from his silence the Professor was now in his element. He unslung his camera and made several long and short exposures, signing to us all to hammer at the walls while he did so. I do not know how long we remained in the cave but when we left we were in a state of mind not usual with prospectors. ‘The formations of those walls appear to be carrying some radio-active ore something similar to that in the Glenelg and Mount Painter formations,’ the Professor said, as we stepped out into sunlight, ‘but that ore is bound up with some ore of lead I do not know. I expect that that lead obscures the gamma ray given off by some hidden element. What that element is I shall endeavour to discover, by assay, when we return to camp.’

‘What kind of thing is the gamma ray?’ the Poet asked me as we began to climb the mountain to see what its top was like.

‘Ask Mac,’ I replied, rather roughly. ‘Do you think I know everything?’

Mac was still explaining the art of distillation, as chiefly practised in Scotland, to the Poet when we reached the summit and found ourselves gazing over a land of sombre, shadeless scrub that stretched unbrokenly to the horizon. The mountain upon which we now stood seemed to be about five miles in length and was almost as flat on top as a table, but deep holes, like that in which our tractor lay, pierced the surface in many places. Those holes were filled with water, doubtless the drainage of periodical rains, but the fluid had become strongly acidulated, and the Professor thought that the holes were of volcanic origin, though the period of their thermal activity must have been in ages so remote that it could not be determined.

‘Probably, they were fiery blow holes which formed in one crater after its central flume had become partly solidified,’ the man of wisdom explained. ‘And at that time the great inverted saucer on which we are standing was one of a series of towering peaks flaming over an ocean in a world evolving from chaos.’

‘Where did that ocean go?’ Wolfram Dick enquired, and thus drew upon himself, in answer, a lecture on primeval Australia which might have been understood by members of the British Association but which meant only an opportunity for a smoke to all who pretended to be listening to the speaker. Certainly, the

Professor was well worth the best of attention, on most occasions, but, at the time, we were not particularly anxious for knowledge on the subject of the world in the making. When the erudite imparter of wisdom finished speaking and reached for the water-bag I was carrying, Dick replaced his pipe in his belt and tried to look as if he had taken an intelligent interest in what had been said, but as he had not heard many words that he understood he wisely refrained from making any comment, and, as very little conversation makes one thirsty in a broiling temperature, and our water-bags were empty, we walked back to camp in thoughtful silence.

After lunch, the Professor began assaying the samples we had carried back from the caves, and before evening he called us all together and announced that they contained a lead and an iron ore in chemical combination and that the minute veins in the specimens were elements known as xenotime, uranium and yttrium. We were disappointed. We had not known that some of the elements he named existed and were not impressed with our newly gained knowledge.

'Is there any value in any of those things you mentioned?' the Poet asked. 'We couldn't make a new kind of patent medicine or anything of that nature with them, could we?'

The Professor decanted some acid mixture on a sheet of blotting-paper, and Mac and I looked on.

'I—I am not yet quite sure,' the assayer answered, slowly, and Mac suddenly stooped and rubbed his leg. All knew from Mac's action that he was suppressing excitement and we waited eagerly for the *dénouement*. I had seen nothing in the residue on the blotting-paper that I recognised as meaning anything.

'This uranium is in oxide form,' went on the Professor, 'and, evidently, is the substance from which the Curies separated radium in the year 1898. It would therefore seem that there is a most remarkable cure, if not exactly a patent medicine, contained in this ore, Poet. I believe radium is now being used to destroy cancerous growths in the human system, but it is applied externally.'

'And two or three pounds weight of radium would be worth millions of pounds in currency,' cried Mac, 'and there is more radium in our mountain than is known to exist elsewhere in the whole world.'

'Let's crush out a hundredweight and——' began Dick, but the Professor held up his hand.

'But we can't extract it,' the Professor went on. 'That precipitate on the blotting-paper is not radium, itself, but only uranium oxide, and although we might separate a radium oxide or chloride from it by very careful work, I calculate that we should have to treat some hundreds of tons of the ore to obtain one gramme.'

'By which you mean that the radium is not worth our attention?' I said.

'I fear so; you see we are only prospectors, and although there may be fortunes in the radium in the mountain formation we should have to expend more money than we possess in the meantime, in the erection of treatment plant, before we could handle the radium, commercially.'

'Then that settles the matter,' sighed Mac. 'It's just our luck. We cannot put up the money to take out the radium we've found. Anyway, if we cannot take ourselves out of this place it won't matter much.'

'I forgot to tell you boys that there were some fellows around this camp in the forenoon when we were over at the caves,' remarked Dick, irrelevantly; 'I saw fresh tracks in the mud round the pool when I went down to catch more fish this afternoon—'

'If you keep on hearing horse-bells and seeing tracks, my man,' Mac reproved, 'you'll maybe soon be hearing a motor-horn and seeing an aeroplane. You ought to be burning out your epitaph on a tree instead of practising for Parliament.'

Strangely enough, Dick made no answer.

That night we were not quite so happy as on the previous evening and when Mac produced his flute and began to play some airs of far-away Scotland he was subjected to many indignities. Finally, after deciding that we should review our situation in the morning we stretched ourselves out around the smoky fire and soon fell asleep.

Some time towards morning I awoke and, as I lay thinking, an old familiar sound floated to my ears. Instantly, I sat up and listened, noting that Wolfram Dick was also in a sitting posture. Again the sound was wafted through the still night air, and I sprang to my feet; it was the musical tinkle of a horse-bell!

'I beg your pardon for doubting you, Dick,' I said. 'Come on!'

Without a word my comrade arose, and next moment we were both running up the bank of the dry creek, away from the sleeping

camp. We knew that where a belled horse was feeding a man would also be near.

'Why did you not go out after that horse when you first heard its bell, Dick?' I asked, as we entered a patch of ti-tree scrub, beyond which we could make out a cluster of pandanus palms.

'Because I didn't hear any bell, before. I only said I had to cheer up my mates.'

'Oh!' I couldn't say more.

Again the bell tinkled and, presently, breaking through the scrub we saw the horse feeding in the moonlight amidst the pandanus trees. It was hobbled and we had, therefore, no difficulty in approaching it. Dick seized its mane and vaulted on to its back and, when I had removed the hobbles and tied back the bell clapper, it at once walked away.

'Don't try any tricks, Dick,' I cautioned. 'Remember you are riding bareback and without reins.'

Dick grinned. 'It's not the first time you and I have traced up a man's camp with his own horse,' he replied. 'You can run behind and change places with me when we see how the old quadruped is heading.'

But there was no necessity to change; the horse steered quietly through the bush, as we had anticipated and in about half a mile's journey came to a halt before a bark hut half hidden on the bank of a creek.

'Hullo!' Dick shouted, dismounting, and an elderly bearded man, partly dressed, appeared at the door. He showed no surprise.

'We've brought home your horse,' began Dick.

'You mean it brought you,' smiled the man. 'I didn't want it before daylight—'

'We are sorry to have spoiled your night's rest,' I broke in. 'We are members of a party trying to get through to Cloncurry and—well—we're bushed and have run against trouble. We found your horse and knew it would take us to its owner—'

'If your name happens to be Stanley,' interrupted the man, smilingly, 'I am really sorry mine is not Livingstone. But I am glad to see you all the same. I intended to call at your camp to-day, but after sunrise.'

'Come with us now,' I urged.

'All right. Just hobble the animal again and set free its bell. He'll be back at his favourite feeding-ground again before we reach your camp.'

Perhaps the horse was, but we followed the creek channel and arrived back in camp in less than an hour, learning on the way that our companion was out so far beyond civilisation for the purpose of studying the Aborigines in their untamed natural state, that a tribe lived in some of the caves on a side of the mountain we had not seen, and that they had already inspected our camp and had reported to our friend on our movements.

'You were right about the tracks, then, after all,' I said to my comrade when we were told of the natives, but the expression on his face made me aware that he was more surprised than I was to hear that natives were anywhere in the vicinity!

It was not yet daylight when we roused the sleepers and introduced our companion. Of course, all were surprised when they saw a strange white man, but the Professor's emotion when he heard his name was suggestive that he knew who the man was. After breakfast, the stranger told us that a new goldfield had been found about fifty miles north of where we were camped and that it was already in motor-coach connection with one of the railways reaching out from Cloncurry. 'The country between here and the new goldfield's camp is entirely unknown,' he added, 'but some of my natives will lead you in when you wish to go.' We thanked the man for his information and offer, and felt greatly relieved to know that our position was not now hopeless. He was a very strange man, but, somehow, we all liked him—at the time!

'Do you know that that mountain over there carries vast formations of radium-containing ore?' the Professor asked our friend, some time during the forenoon.

'Oh, yes,' he replied. 'My natives—I feel that I am now almost a native, myself, you know—call it the Ghost Mountain. They think the spirits of their dead shine through the walls in the caves but, of course, the illumination is caused by some radio-active element, the rays of which are rendered harmless by the lead ore in which their origin is shrouded.'

'There must be millions of pounds worth of radium in that mountain?' I said, surprised at the man's knowledge.

'There is, my friend, but it has been there since the world was formed and probably will remain there until this weary old planet is smelted in the furnaces of the sun.'

'Are you a mineralogist?' I asked.

The stranger smiled and looked meaningfully at the Professor. 'No,' he answered. 'I find the study of Man more interesting and

that is why I am here. I hope to be laid in one of those world-old caves when the period of my earthly existence has expired, and I have already arranged with the natives that my resting-place will be walled up when that event occurs. With the beginning of the world shall my end be.'

'Cheerful beggar!' muttered Mac, and I think I was about to say something not very polite when the Poet said, 'You'll have a mighty fine tombstone, but if you'd care to go and peg out now we could blow your cave in with gelignite—'

'I hear the toot of a horn!' yelled Wolfram Dick, prancing about as if demented, and evidently thinking that Dick's peculiar gift did not call for expression at the moment, or was not appropriate, the Poet flung a burning log at his head.

'Our friend is one of the world's greatest living anthropologists, Dick,' the Professor said, reprovingly, when he saw that the notorious prevaricator had dodged the missile; but Dick would not be restrained.

'I can't help what he is,' he cried, 'and I don't care if he leaves his bones in a cave to grow into radium. I heard a horn all right. Listen! There it goes again!'

And, wonderful to relate, he must actually have heard a motor-horn, for, next moment, a large car swung into view over a rise back the track and came towards us at reckless speed.

'Dear me!' exclaimed the Professor, 'this part of the world is becoming a bit congested, but—Dear me! Surely my eyes are not deceiving me! I know those two men in that car.'

I thought his eyesight must be better than mine but I ran down the track with Mac and Dick to stay the oncoming car from falling into the hole which had brought about our own trouble. It was almost upon us before its brakes were applied, and as it stopped two helmeted men dressed in white duck sprang to the ground. They were our old comrades, Miserable Peter and Lucky Jack, the American.

'We've followed your tracks right across Australia,' cried the former as we shook hands and a tear glistened in his affected eye, as of old. Then, hurriedly, both explained at once that they had been at other ends of the earth when news of our projected expedition had reached them, and that they had followed on after us as soon as they had arrived in Australia. The scene which ensued need not be described. . . . Later in the day we all went over to the caves and both Miserable Peter and Lucky Jack were amazed at sight of the glowing walls.

'I haven't had time to tell you yet that we have just come from the Haut Katanga radium fields in the Belgian Congo,' said Peter, as we talked in one of the caves. 'There is nothing there anything like this. We've got untold wealth here—'

'And it is likely to wait here,' groaned Mac. 'We can't take it away.'

'What do you mean, Mac?' Lucky Jack asked. 'Have the Australian mining laws been altered?'

'No, but radium is not mined like gold, or anything else.'

'If it is only a question of enough money to put up a treatment plant I can easily raise it in the States,' said Jack.

'And I can interest some wealthy Belgian friends,' added Peter.

'You forget that we are Britons, gentlemen,' put in the Professor, quietly. 'We cannot allow ourselves to be the means of letting any country but our own get the radium that lies here—'

'Gentlemen,' broke in the anthropologist, 'I am a Briton, and I believe that I possess sufficient wealth in the Old Country to enable us to work—'

'Best keep your money in the Old Country, old man,' interrupted Mac, 'we don't want it any more than you will yourself when this time-old mountain is smelted in the sun.'

The man of strange ideas only smiled, and Mac at once apologised for the unkind repetition of his words. . . .

A week later we reached Cloncurry, where our story created only a mild sensation, and thence we went south to the new opal fields just discovered in New South Wales. To-day the cry for radium resounds throughout the world, and in that world-old mountain it lies waiting, guarded until our return by the man, whose name I must not give, and the natives whom he will not leave. But the comrades are again scattered.

ROBERT M. MACDONALD.

THE SECRET OF THE ICE.

SOMEWHERE in Europe, not far from the borderline of France and Switzerland, is an hotel which shall be nameless. This hotel stands in a town which shall also be nameless, because it is the wish of a certain club, nameless for a like reason. The members of this club, in fact, hire this hotel for their own special selves for a couple of days in July every year in order that they may plan their campaign for the coming season without interruption. Pretty desperate propositions some of those plans are. The Members are in fact an Inner Brotherhood of Mountaineers and their Bond of Union lies in the accomplishment of something new on the peaks every season. As they have already accomplished everything within a mile—or a foot—of reason that is to be done, it is evident that every year the margin of safety becomes less and less pronounced, new ventures become more and more difficult to find even, let alone tackle.

Of course that hardy annual, the *Pic Talus*, by its south face, occupied the centre of the carpet. It was a most attractive ascent, perfectly justifiable, if it would only ‘go.’ ‘Go,’ however, it would not. Gaul, Swiss, Jap, German, Austrian, Italian, Briton had assaulted it, only to return, beaten and dissatisfied. The President was waxing eloquent, calling for volunteers from amongst otherwise intelligent men, to join him, an otherwise intelligent man, in a valiant attempt to break their necks, when the door opened and forthwith babel broke forth.

‘Hullo, Larolle. Here at last. Glad to see you. Where’ve you been? Where did you get that crack on the head?’ and so forth. Larolle was one of the youngest members of the club, and assuredly the most popular. He was a natural born mountaineer, skilful, courageous, enterprising to the verge of rashness, but only to the verge, not beyond—that is to say, not beyond for him.

As soon as the tumult of greeting had died down, the President harked back to his subject.

‘We were discussing, Larolle, at the moment of your arrival, our old friend, or rather enemy, the hitherto insuperable south face of the *Pic Talus*—’

'It's been done!' interrupted Larolle. 'Was done a week ago.'

The President regarded him with a haggard eye.

'By a Frenchman, Larolle?' he asked, despairingly, convinced that some awful Briton or still more awful German had forestalled them.

'Half,' grinned Larolle cheerfully.

'Half?' enquired the President. 'What do you mean—'

'Who was your companion, Larolle?' broke in Dunot.

That was just like Dunot. He had an uncanny habit of finding out things in advance and spoiling fun. Moreover his tone was peremptory, almost a command, quite a command in fact. Still it was Dunot who had spoken, and Dunot was Dunot, Founder of the Club, and perpetual Vice-President.

He was other things besides a mountaineer. He was a big-game shot, and explorer, and a most eccentric archæologist. These pursuits, however, do not generally connote public importance, and it was rumoured that Dunot was of even national importance. 'How? In what capacity?' people wondered. It did not occur to the wonderers that a man with such tastes might go to any continent, country, or island, might visit any place from Everest to the Kentucky Caves, from Paris to a Papuan shack without risking political suspicion, that Dunot, in fact, might be a very important personage in the French Secret Service.

Larolle was a Gallio in respect of all of these things. Nevertheless he answered up promptly.

'I'm not quite sure who or what he was, sir, but I am pretty certain he was English.'

'Why?'

'He straightened out under an overhang and found it nearer his head than he thought.'

There was a burst of laughter. Then Larolle concluded quite gravely:

'Otherwise he spoke quite admirable French.'

More laughter. More questions, facetious and serious.

'I'm afraid I really can't tell you,' Larolle replied. 'He called himself Monsieur Outis, which of course is only Greek for Mr. Nobody, which does not help. I rather fancy I've heard of him some time ago as always hanging about that part of the world—'

'Do you mean a big fellow who looks like a *moujik* who has clipped his beard and turned gentleman?'

'That's the chap.'

'O, the Mystery Man of the glacier. O, yes, we know all about him.'

'How interesting!' commented Dunot. 'A Mystery Man whom half a dozen people here know all about. I am very fortunate because I myself would like to know something about him. Perhaps one of you young gentlemen can tell me, please.'

The half-dozen young gentlemen simultaneously under their breaths voted Dunot a pig—but it was a Secret Vote. Then one essayed.

'Well, sir, they say he's almost always thereabouts, all the year round, and pretty nearly day in and day out—'

'All except when that German turns up, a big, thick chap with blue specs.'

'Yes, and then he bolts to covert like a rabbit.'

There was a pause. As a matter of fact this exhaustive *dossier* covered the sum total of available information from that quarter. Then Dunot said, with a laugh :

'Thanks so much! And now, Mr. President, with your permission I propose that Larolle give us some account of his adventure with this gentleman with a Greek name who says "Damn!" when he bumps his head.'

'It's a long story, I'm afraid,' began Larolle, apologetically.

'Never mind! Cut it short then!' was the encouraging interruption.

'All right! Here goes. It was all your fault, Roustain, you villain. Where's that map I lent you?'

Roustain shamefacedly produced the missing article.

'I'm sorry——' he began.

'Never mind! Can't be helped!' interrupted Larolle, securing his property. 'Well, I had to make shift with what I could get, an antique, made by Herodotus I fancy. Anyhow, it landed me in the western instead of the south-western *vallon* and, as the weather was thick, I never found out my mistake till I came near to butting into that silly old western *arête*. Of course to go back over all that ghastly rubble was unthinkable, so the only alternative was to climb out by the ridge on the right. It went easily enough and I was scrambling down the other side—it was hot as a stewpan and black as pitch, when there came a flash of lightning which seemed to sear my eyes. Then the thunder let go and half knocked my head off with the noise and, what was worse, wholly dislodged a

boulder which sent me flying. After which I don't recollect anything until I came to in Monsieur Outis' *cabane*, with him nursing me like a sick child and pouring hot whisky down my throat.'

'Larolle's idea of child nurture,' commented a member.

'Well, so far as I can make out what had happened was that, as I was coming off, I had let out a yell, though I have no recollection of doing so, which had reached him. Also, as good luck would have it, I landed out almost opposite his *cabane* door so that when he came out when the storm slacked a little later, he nearly fell over me. Consequently he was able to take me in hand at once. The result was that what with a good dinner—the fellow could cook like a *chef*—and a good night, barring a crack on the head and a few bruises, I was as fit as ever.'

'The *cabane*?' in reply to a question. 'You would hardly call it that. It was more like a gentleman's Chambers—'

'O, never mind the *cabane*,' interrupted someone else. 'Get to the climb, man. The *cabane* will keep.'

Larolle hesitated. He had chanced to look at Dunot and noted something more than annoyance in his face. Nothing was said, however, and he took heart of grace and resumed.

'Well. I soon found that our friend, Outis, was as keen as mustard. Consequence was we talked climbing shop all the evening, and of course we got on to the south face of the *Pic Talus*, and he said he thought he had worked out a route if he could only get a first-class man to go with him—and that he did not want a better than myself, or some stuff of that kind (he seemed to know all about all of us), and that, if I felt equal to it, we would have a shot next morning.'

'Who could resist such a chance? The face was in splendid condition, rocks warm and dry. The snow!—getting there and back was wicked. Now then. You all know the place where that apology for a buttress impinges on the face, the place which has turned everyone up to date? As a matter of fact we have all overshot the true route at that point by about three hundred feet, and with that he plunged into a medley of bewildering technicalities—belays, threads, traverses, cracks, etc., all followed with breathless interest by the audience, some horrid place you had to squeeze through, very like some other horrid place on the *Grépon*, then into another maze of words, right up to the triumphant exit on the skyline amidst wildly enthusiastic applause.'

Followed a whirlwind of conversation whereof Larolle was the

focus. Dunot pulled him by his sleeve and monopolised him by the action. Thereby he monopolised the attention of the room.

'Now then, Larolle,' he began, 'if you are not too tired, would you mind telling me what the interior of the *cabane* is like? Never mind about the man! His main object, so far as I can see, seems to be concealing as much of his face as possible with hair.'

Larolle laughed, nodded, and then commenced.

'The interior? O, as I said, more like a gentleman's Chambers, and with plenty of money behind, at that. Walls panelled with polished oak, stove—would not have been out of place in a Paris sanctum, bookcases—'

'Yes. The bookcases! Did you chance to get a look at them?'

'Yes. One was full of ordinary stuff, most of it in French, with a good sprinkling of English, and a few odd works in other languages: the other was crammed with every possible work on glaciers and glacier-motion in the world in all the languages in civilisation.'

'Any by that English amateur, Godfrey Stornell?'

'Rather! Every single one, and, so far as I could judge, the best-read books in the room, backs all loose, and so forth. Curious you should ask that.'

Dunot let the implicit question pass.

'And now about that quaint knife of his he used for scraping holds clear of ice, prising out bits of rock, and so on. Did he tell you where he got the idea from?'

'Hardly quaint,' began Larolle. 'It was very strong, broad in the back—'

'Quite! Quite! but where did he get the idea from?'

Larolle reflected a moment.

'Ye-es. I recollect now. He told me his father had got the tip from a friend.'

'Are you quite sure he said "friend," Larolle?'

Larolle regarded Dunot with amazement.

'Are you a wizard, Monsieur Dunot,' he exclaimed at last, 'that you ask that? He was on the point of saying "friend," but he bit the word in half as it were, and changed it to "acquaintance" and that was not the word he meant, if expression counts for anything.'

Dunot nodded. Larolle waited expectantly for the next question. So did everyone else. At length the President spoke, and sharply.

'Come now, Dunot, don't you think that after all this mysti-

fying it is about time you let out something definite ? What is it all about ?'

Dunot regarded him as if he were thinking of something else.

'What is it all about, eh ? What is it all about ? Why you know, Bourdonnais, just as well as I do. So does Carron there. That accident on the *Glacier Talus* nearly twenty years ago. You know all about it, Carron.'

Carron was a senior member with the conversational methods of a plantigrade—Grizzly Bear for choice, left a mark like a soup-plate with a fringe of claws to it. He answered with heavy deliberation.

'It was a great deal less than twenty years ago, fifteen, perhaps ; sixteen at most. Accident ! Humpf ! Know all about it ? Nobody knows all about it. If anyone did, it would be particularly unfortunate for somebody. You know as much as I do, perhaps more. Why ask me ?'

'To see if you are of the same mind as you were then. I don't think we have discussed the matter since : I am not even sure we have so much as mentioned it.' Then, to the room : 'Everyone here familiar with the details. No ? Nogent, can you help us ?'

Nogent was the Secretary, and his memory was reputed more reliable than most people's notebooks.

'The official account, sir ? Yes. I can try, anyhow. So far as I can remember, it ran something on these lines. Two English gentlemen, Messieurs Assheton and Stornell, were making scientific observations on the glacier. All at once Stornell, who was busy with the theodolite, was startled by a cry, and looked up just in time to see his companion disappearing down a crevasse. He darted to the spot, but the unfortunate man had vanished. He shouted down the chasm in the hope of hearing at least some indication that Assheton still lived, but in vain. His cries, however, brought to the spot two Frenchmen, Messieurs Dunot and Carron, who were prospecting the near-by *Pic Talus*. An attempt at rescue was forthwith made, but had to be abandoned as impracticable. The theory is that Assheton, in clearing a small crevasse, must have overjumped and slipped into a larger one. This explanation appeared to be borne out by certain marks on the ice. That in such a labyrinth as that portion of the glacier such an accident could easily happen is undeniable, that it should have happened to a mountaineer of Assheton's experience is difficult to understand. That's all,' concluded Nogent, 'except the inevitable moral

tag people can't keep away from. You know. "The tragedy only emphasises the necessity of constant care, even in the simplest places," or something to that effect.'

'Thanks very much!' said Dunot. 'I won't compliment you on your memory, because that would be a platitude, but I would not mind betting that you have the letterpress pretty nearly word for word. So there you have it, gentlemen. A plain, straightforward account of an unfortunate mishap attributable to momentary carelessness. As clear as daylight, isn't it? And yet you will observe that the explanation does not satisfy Monsieur Carron who was there at the time.'

'Or Monsieur Dunot, who was also there at the time,' observed Carron, 'or for that matter our President, Monsieur Bourdonnais.'

'Yes, but that was later on, and I had something to go on, something solid, whereas Carron and you—but why bring it up now, after all these years? There is nothing to be done, never was for that matter.'

'Is there not?' replied Dunot, and there was something like exultation in his voice. 'Now, I think there is. The time has come. That is why I bring up the story of the accident, and that is why I am going to enlist your help in its solution, gentlemen.'

There was a hum of assent, but at the same time a subcurrent of whispering which indicated that this assent was in some degree qualified. It was Nogent who voiced the nature of the qualification.

'Of course, sir, you may rely on any help we can give, but—at the same time we should just—well, we should like to know something about what we are taking in hand. You, Monsieur le President, for instance, hinted you had something solid to go on?'

'That's reasonable enough,' admitted Bourdonnais reluctantly. 'Following on the catastrophe on the glacier, another threatened. Rumour got busy in a most unsavoury manner to the effect that the firm of Assheton and Stornell had been somehow concerned in some transaction of a singularly base and sordid character, a transaction which, if brought to light, would not only have meant ruin to the firm but a long period of penal servitude for the offending parties. The natural result was one of two conclusions, either that Assheton had committed suicide to avoid exposure, which in view of his unimpeachable character was unthinkable, or that Stornell, to avoid exposure, had made away with his partner, which was not quite so unthinkable.'

'Yes, and just one thing more. That rumour was justified.

The transaction in contemplation was a most serious crime, a crime against the Crown, and Stornell was implicated. On Assheton's decease the English Government decided not to institute proceedings, as his evidence would have been invaluable. It was not a case on which the Government could afford to fall down, and—I think I have said enough, Dunot.'

'Quite enough,' replied Dunot, in a censorious tone which implied 'and too much.' 'I must ask you all on your honour not to try and nose up this case. You will get no satisfaction, quite possibly burn your fingers, and very likely do a lot of mischief.' Then, without waiting for a reply: 'And what was it exactly that roused your suspicions, Carron ?'

'The fellow was acting,' answered Carron surlily. The atmosphere of Olympus was obviously not charged with peace. Nogent switched in a question.

'But surely, Monsieur Carron, I understand that you and Monsieur Dunot were close by. I mean from anywhere on the *cirque* above the glacier—why you can see every inch of it.'

'That counts for nothing, absolutely nothing. If the glacier were in full view of us, we were in full view of the glacier. Moreover, we were attempting to find a way to the upper snowfield along the side of that gorge with the suicidal icefall in it, so you can imagine how much time and opportunity we had for looking about. Why, he might have hanged, drowned, butchered, buried and scalped his man without our knowing it. No. The odd thing to my mind is that Assheton should ever have taken such a man as Stornell into partnership. As it is, I am convinced that he was as innocent as a babe unborn of all knowledge or suspicion—'

'O la ! la ! la !' exclaimed the President. 'Let us assume that Assheton was an angel of light and that Stornell had horns and a tail. The question is whether the *Glacier Talus* affair was an accident or murder, and if the latter, whether we can bring it home. That is it, is it not, Dunot ? And by the way, you have not told us yet what it was first roused your suspicion.'

'The knife. There is, I fancy, a good deal in what Carron said about Assheton being utterly unsuspicuous when he came out. Stornell had hustled him off before rumour had time to find breath. I am pretty sure, too, that Mrs. Assheton had no idea of foul play, but I am perfectly certain that young Luke Assheton, then high up at Eton, had. Whether it was natural acuteness, or instinct, or whether someone had given him a hint, he watched

Stornell like a cat, a very malevolent cat. One thing he discovered, and that was that Stornell's knife was missing. Now Stornell's knife was of a very peculiar pattern and one feature was that the blade was rather broader in the centre than at the hilt. Also it had Stornell's name on both blade and sheath. Master Luke asked me to ascertain what had become of it, and Stornell told me it had worked out of its sheath whilst he was craning over the edge of the crevasse to see if there were any trace of Assheton. That damned him.'

'How?'

'How? How could a knife shaped like that work out of its sheath. Moreover, remember I had examined the place, with Carron, and to crane over anywhere thereabouts would have meant a header down the crevasse, eh, Carron?'

'Not a doubt about it, any more than there is about Stornell's guilt. Still, what is the good of talking about it? We can do nothing, and even if we could, it is far too early for action.'

'That is as may be,' returned Dunot. 'Meanwhile we must fill in some of the intervening years. Master Luke went back to Eton and then, in accordance with his father's wish, to Oxford. On coming down, however, he went dead the other way. Of course Assheton had intended that his son should carry on the business. Instead, however, Luke drew out every penny he had and washed his hands of the whole concern. It was a very large sum and might have broke Stornell, had he not, like a wise man, made provision against some such happening. Besides which his friends, and even some prominent City men who, unwotting of Assheton's side of the question, thought he had been badly treated, rallied to him. Consequently the firm not only weathered the storm but even increased in wealth, if not in repute. Meanwhile Luke Assheton had attached himself to a survey of Somewhere in the Back of Beyond in Africa and came back with the reputation of a young man with the *Wanderlust* strongly developed. Consistently with this reputation he has kept on periodically disappearing into no one knows where, and that's where he is now.'

'No one knows where and that's where he is now,' demanded Carron crossly—he was like a grizzly bear with a sore head over what he held to be waste of time. 'What do you mean, Dunot? Where is he now?'

'I wonder!' observed Dunot drily, whereat Larolle burst out.
'So that's it, is it? Upon my word, Monsieur Dunot, this is a

pretty kettle of fish you have served us up. You mean that my bearded hermit is—'

' Young Assheton, of course, and your big thick German is Stornell, equally of course. Just at present he is watching the glacier like a terrier, on the chance of its giving up its dead, and Assheton is watching him—'

' Couple of fools both ! ' snapped Carron. ' They are far in advance of the time. Nothing can possibly come to light yet. Think of the pace a glacier moves.'

' That is exactly what I am thinking of and what Stornell has been thinking of and Luke Assheton has been thinking of. You may be quite certain that the motion of all the different parts of the glacier have been measured with meticulous care. Consider, my friend, some glaciers move at an average rate of a hundred and thirty metres a year, in which case the remains of the deceased would be many months overdue. As it is, you know the Talus is a freak. It starts from that big field of *névé*, crowds itself through that gorge, and spreads out into the *talus* which gives it its name. No. The folly does not lie there.'

' Where then ? '

' Look here. We may assume if we wish that Assheton is waiting with a double object, to bring home the crime to his father's murderer, and also to give his father's remains a Christian burial. Now Stornell's object must be single, to remove any possible trace of the murder. He has piled up enough circumstantial evidence to have himself convicted a dozen times over. Unfortunately it is only circumstantial, so that he won't even be convicted once, not even on that idiotic disguise—'

' Why idiotic ? ' asked Nogent.

' My dear chap. No amateur can disguise himself. He gets up his front all right, but he has only to turn round and walk away, and his gait betrays him. No, the folly—'

' But why don't you put the matter in the hands of the police ? ' interrupted the President.

' My dear sir,' replied Dunot, restraining himself with difficulty, ' after the funeral, considering what my suspicions were, I could do no other than represent them to the Rue Jérusalem, who in turn notified Scotland Yard. Now one advantage those great institutions have over individuals is that time does not count with them. They can afford to exercise unending patience and unceasing watchfulness. Stornell has been taped since that day.'

One disadvantage under which they both labour is that, so far as I know, there does not exist a Rue Jérusalem or Scotland Yard Mountaineering Club. I do not think members of either force would "feature" with conspicuous success on a glacier. And now, *please*, may I have to say what I want to about where the folly lies ?

Profuse apologies were followed by an encouraging silence, and Dunot continued.

'The folly is that glaciers do not render up their dead in one piece. I don't want to be gruesome but, to take for example the familiar Mount Blanc accident of 1820, what was recovered of the three victims—portions of three skulls, some tufts of hair, a jaw-bone, a hand, two arms and hands ? That is practically all. What chance—what chance is there of the glacier supplying evidence of the murder we are confident was committed ? None. Not one in a million, yet it is that millionth chance which has got on Stornell's nerves and may yet serve to bring home his crime to him.'

He paused. This time no one spoke though the air was electric with expectancy.

'How ? For one thing he has written to me—to me, a letter to the effect that he understands that I am high in the confidence of the Government, that I will doubtless recollect meeting him on a melancholy occasion some years ago, and that he has reason to believe that close to the scene of the tragedy a dangerous criminal has located himself, a criminal with designs which may prove disastrous to international peace—Stornell ! scrupulous about international peace.'

Bourdonnais frowned quickly and Dunot steadied himself.

'It is an idiotic letter,' he resumed ; 'not the work of a sane man, but it does show how desperately anxious he is to get Assheton out of the way, even for a time. Now my conception is to work on those nerves thus—that the club shall first meet for the *Pic Talus*, that the members should arrive in driblets and that some member of each driblet should get into conversation with this "German scientist" and always bring up the subject of the accident, work it one after another, till the place is raw. You see the idea ? It is not a pleasant one. In fact I hate it, but when it comes to bringing a callous criminal and murderer to book—'

'I understand now,' interrupted Carron, 'why you exclaimed so dramatically, "The time has come" ! I quite agree. Very well. In these circumstances don't you think it would be better

to leave us to work out a scheme of campaign whilst you are off with someone else, Larolle for choice, to the spot? Otherwise the time may have come—and gone.'

'Bravo, Carron!' exclaimed Dunot heartily. 'That is the most sensible thing you have said for a long time. I can leave all the arrangements with confidence to you and Bourdonnais. Can you come, Larolle? Good man! Then the sooner we get some rest the better, for, till the first relief comes, there won't be much sleep for either of us.'

Two mornings later quoth Larolle to Dunot:

'We may live to bless that ancient map of Herodotus which sent me astray. Thanks to it we have been able to approach unobserved and here we are, just above Assheton's *cabane*, tucked away comfortably in observation—'

'Not so much of your "comfortably," young fellow!' retorted Dunot, shifting uneasily on the boulders. 'You must have a hide like an alligator to be comfortable here. There's a stone trying to burrow into my— Hullo. Here comes our bird—up with the sun and a bit before it,' as Stornell came stumbling along in the half light. 'I wonder where Assheton is. I've not seen him leave the *cabane*.'

The sun rose. The air grew warmer and the two watchers wriggled round to the south-east aspect of the particular rock each had selected for cover, discontentedly munching chocolate and longing for a smoke. Below them Stornell was pacing to and fro opposite the snout of the glacier, waiting for the sunlight to illuminate the opaque surface into the semblance of transparency, but of Assheton there was no sign.

All at once Larolle whispered eagerly.

'There he is. See that gleam of metal, down there. Those are his field-glasses. See! Not a hundred yards from Stornell.'

Dunot looked and pursed up his lips.

'Humph. That's a danger I had not foreseen. I don't want Assheton to get into trouble over this business and there is no doubt, if anything did turn up, Stornell would fight to the death rather than he should get to it.'

'Bah!' was Larolle's comment. 'Assheton would wring his neck with one hand.'

'Well, that would get him into trouble, wouldn't it? Hush, I believe he sees something.'

Stornell had suddenly become rigid. Then he mounted a great

block of old ice, some of the *débris* of the last autumn which the spring sun had barely cleansed of its winter cloak of snow. For some minutes he stood, peering through his field-glasses, then leaped down and strode towards the glacier. The watchers could see Assheton rise and work his way a little nearer.

'We may as well do likewise,' suggested Dunot. 'By my faith, it's going to be a hissing hot day, so he won't be able to stay there long. O, keep to covert, Larolle. Don't you see that if Assheton recognises you, or Stornell spots me, there may be no end of complic— Gad! he does see something.'

Yet Stornell moved hesitatingly. Once and again he stopped to peer and peer and peer. Once and again he ran back to the ice-block and focused his glasses, again to advance and again to stop, baffled.

'That shows,' commented Dunot, 'that whatever he does see must be pretty deep in. He loses sight of it when he gets near in.'

'To say nothing of the change of the angle of sight,' added Larolle.

'Anyhow, he won't be able to carry on the game long, unless he wants to be killed—not a bad job either.'

It was even so. All night long and night after night before since the first warm breath of spring, the frost had been at work through the chilly hours of darkness, freezing the moisture, gnawing out small pieces from the live mountain, widening fissures, undermining towers, yet holding all in a death grip till the royal hand of the sun released the captives. Then they would escape. Not far above that portion of the glacier snout opposite Stornell, a stately, but most evilly rotten pinnacle of rock intruded. It shone first like a bar of red gold then like a great black obelisk, laced with numerous and ever more numerous lines of silver. Then came the first stone, to stop on the icy surface below. Then another, to slither and stop. Others, to slither, stop, slither and stop again, as the frozen surface became liquid in the heat, and so till one would drop over the edge on to the *débris* below, till another would shoot over, till slip became a hiss, the hiss became a hum, and the flying stone invisible as a bullet.

Stornell heeded none of these things at first. Then, as a swift stone sung by, he shook his head as an angry man at an importunate wasp. Then he dashed right to the base of the wall of ice. The

crest overhung. He was safe from the stones there. Then he began hacking desperately at the great ice-wall.

There was no hide and seek now. Assheton was standing on the block from which Stornell had reconnoitred, his glasses glued to his eyes. Dunot and Larolle were pounding across the moraine, unheard and unheeded. Next a block of ice fell from the overhanging crest, missing Stornell by inches. Then he turned and ran.

Even as he turned, he recognised Assheton, shortened his axe, and ran in at him. Assheton braced himself for the onset. Dunot dragged out a pistol, and swore at Larolle, whose headlong rush had brought him between the weapon and its target. From the glacier came a shrill hiss. There was a dull thud, and Stornell was down on his face with a broken spine. Assheton carried him to safety, safety in the shelter of the ice-block, but by then Stornell was very still.

Assheton laid him down gently, even tenderly.

'I war not with the dead,' he said gloomily, 'but you two. What—'

'We came in the hope of bringing home his crime——' began Dunot. Assheton interrupted.

'You think then? My father?' his voice choked.

'Assheton,' interposed Larolle quickly, 'you have a stretcher? Yes? We shall need it. Will you fetch it?' Then, as Assheton turned away: 'See here, Monsieur Dunot, what do you make of this?' He tapped the ice-block.

It was last season's ice, had lain there all the previous winter, perhaps autumn. Stornell and Assheton must have passed it time and again, yet clear beneath a thin transparency was an upper arm and shoulder, fresh as they had been on the day of the tragedy, and from the joint of collar-bone and shoulder-blade protruded a horn-handle.

'A masterly stroke though a felon one,' pronounced Dunot. 'That terrible downward stab which touches both heart and lungs. You see, Larolle, the blade must have jammed and Stornell had either to release his hold or follow the corpse down the crevasse.'

Larolle nodded.

'Quite!' he assented, 'but are we to tell Assheton?'

Dunot touched the ice-block.

'He was his father,' he said simply, 'and he would wish him buried in England.'

CLAUDE E. BENSON.

NEW LAMPS FOR OLD.

CRITICISM can only be the frank expression of your personal prejudices. The Bromide comment 'I know what I like' has been the butt of more ridicule than it really deserves. *De gustibus . . . etc.* Heaven forbid! But it is one thing to state your idiosyncrasies of taste—and another to say that posterity will agree with you. Mr. Walpole set me thinking. . . .

'The six volumes of the *Forsyte Saga*', he wrote, 'may be greater or less than these other masterpieces' (*Clarissa*, *Vanity Fair*, the *Barchester Novels*, *Middlemarch*, and *Beauchamp's Career* were named above), 'but they are in the proper succession and will, I am convinced, seem so to our posterity. And, one may add, it is comforting and refreshing in these days of hurried, fragmentary and cynical little works of fiction to have at one's hand anything as carefully wrought, as solidly conceived, as patiently elaborated as these books.'

What, I ruminated, is the traditional novel, and how does it differ from the modern novel?

For the space of a long summer holiday I resolved to ignore the alluringly bound, hot-from-the-press new library books in favour of those others in that part of my bookshelf where the dust is not often disturbed. I selected the very books named by Mr. Walpole. They added considerably to the weight of my luggage. It was worth it.

With the exception of *Clarissa*, I had read these books before. I was brought up on them. But the books you are brought up on are very different from the ones you discover for yourself later on. This time I meant to read Thackeray and Trollope and George Eliot and Meredith from the discoverer's point of view—without any guide to spoil their points for me by indicating them.

Clarissa was a toughish morsel to begin with. The original nine volumes were congested into two in my early nineteenth-century edition. The thin India paper, the microscopic print, the long 's's, the archaic language—these were drawbacks. I found myself agreeing with Voltaire.

'Il est cruel,' he said, 'pour un homme aussi vif que je le suis de lire neuf volumes entiers dans lesquels on ne trouve rien du

tout, et qui serve seulement à faire voir que Mademoiselle Clarisse aime un débauché nommé Monsieur de Lovelace.'

And yet Samuel Richardson so thrilled eighteenth-century England that the inhabitants of one village ran to ring the church bells when, in the last instalment of *Pamela*, his heroine reached her ambiguously happy end! At a time when romances in the old French taste told the amours of princes and princesses in language coldly metaphysical and absurd, he was the first to chronicle the manners and events and passions of the men and women of his day. If Voltaire expressed the Gallic point of view, here—from the lips of Dr. Johnson—is the Anglo-Saxon:

'Why, sir, if you were to read Richardson for the story your impatience would be so much fretted that you would hang yourself. But you must read him for the sentiment, and consider the story only as giving occasion to the sentiment.'

Aha! Sentiment. I made a note of that. I had an idea that here was one of the essential points of the traditional English novel. I also made a note of the following admission quoted in the preface from Richardson himself. From his boyhood he had been noted for having invention. His companions delighted to single him out to tell them stories. 'Some I told them from my reading as true; others from my head as mere invention; of which they would be most fond, and often were affected by them. . . . All my stories carried with them, I am bold to say, a useful moral.'

From Richardson I passed on to the Victorians. I came to mock and stayed, if not to pray, at least to enjoy myself. They added to the sense of rest and irresponsibility that is part of the right holiday spirit. For Thackeray and Trollope make no demand on the psychic energy of their readers. One has but to abandon oneself to the broad stream of the narrative . . . allow oneself to become involved in the plot. . . . The author does the rest.

In *Vanity Fair* he is a little too much the showman manipulating his puppets. In *Barchester* he assumes no such omniscience. 'Trollope is more than the painter or the sculptor of his people,' one critic has remarked, 'he is the biographer of them all.' The same cannot be said of George Eliot. To her there clings a suspicion of writing, I will not say from the pulpit, but at least from the chair of a Ph.D. I wonder why Mr. Walpole mentioned *Middlemarch* rather than one of the earlier and more spontaneous novels—*Adam Bede*, *Silas Marner*, *The Mill on the Floss*.

The traditional novelist, I perceived, is (1) and foremost, a narrator : he sets out with admirable gusto to tell a story—not to reflect a mood or dissect a motive.

(2) His attitude towards life and his fellow-beings is social ; his work mirrors the manners and customs of his times ; his plots hinge upon social dilemmas.

(3) His novels are flavoured with that wholesome English sentiment approved, as we have seen, of Dr. Johnson. The naïve cynicism we find in Thackeray is simply the reverse side of the sentimental medal.

(4) Although the moral is not as a rule allowed to obtrude, the atmosphere lacks the *insouciance*, shall we say, of the early ballads and folk-stories.

These are four points. There is a fifth that is difficult to name without having recourse to words such as genius, creative magic, inspiration. Richardson's friends were near the mark when they described him as 'having invention.' Call it what you like, the immortal narrative writers all had it. It is the quality that endows Dickens's caricatures with their vitality—the quality that makes Barsetshire as real as Cornwall or Kent.

Beauchamp's Career gave me pause. For Meredith, as Mr. Priestley has observed, while setting out with all the appearance of writing a novel of manners, was really the first writer of fiction to approach his subject as a poet. He was only interested in the lyrical moments—but he came to a compromise with the traditional pattern. The compromise was unfortunate, since it cost his novels the effects of simplicity and unity necessary to a work of art. And although his prose recalls poetry it does not always recall the best poetry, it does not always recall very sincere poetry. It may be that this age is over-critical of Meredith. There is a cult of Trollope even as there is a cult of what the dressmakers grotesquely describe as the 'period' frock. There is no such cult of Meredith. We detect in him too many of our own traits.

Now the author of the *Forsyte Saga* went back on Meredith and gave us the old-fashioned social chronicle. All the ingredients of the nineteenth-century novel are there—except the yeast that leavens the whole. Galsworthy—like Kipling and Wells and Bennett—is one of our giants with one foot, as it were, in the obituary notice, whom it is difficult to appraise without overdoing it or reacting to the opposite extreme. He is a writer of great talent and experience. His earlier work was alive. Some

of his short stories are beautiful. But in his monumental attempt at reviving the traditional novel (complete with certain modern trappings to bring it up to date) it seems to me that he has failed. I closed the *Saga* at the end with a sense of having been cheated. Evidently these Forsytes have a portentous significance for their author, but somehow he doesn't succeed in getting them across the footlights. I cannot share Mr. Walpole's conviction that to be 'in the proper succession' will seem so important to our posterity as to compensate for this lack of vitality.

In the proper succession? Are we doomed for ever to follow in the tradition begun by Richardson and developed by his heirs of the following century? There seems no more reason to insist that writers should model their work on the nineteenth-century novel than on the Nordic epic or the Elizabethan drama. To every age its own form of expression. The sooner we get rid of this Victorian complex the better. The iconoclasts are just as bad as the idolaters. Let us pay our tribute of admiration to the traditional novel—and pass on to an understanding with the modern variety.

After Meredith the memory of Pater and Wilde and the Yellow Book lingers with a mouldy smell of the decadence of yester-year. R.L.S. does not altogether escape this taint of the nineties. Then came quite a new sort of genius, country bred, holding Tragedy by the hand. His name was Hardy. And another new type arose from the sea on the wings of Romance. His name was Conrad. But as Mr. Walpole (whose cursory review I am taking much too seriously) does not mention any of these, we shall get on without dwelling on their merits and demerits—neither pausing in the shadow of the pre-war writers mentioned above—to have a look at the 'hurried, fragmentary, and cynical little works' of our own day.

There is an initial difficulty. In the last century some half-dozen great names stand out clearly. There were writers good, bad and indifferent then as now, but the bad and indifferent have been forgotten. This fate has not yet overtaken our own bards and indifferents. The publishers puff them and the reviewers notice them and the public reads them along with the good. We have to pick a handful of sound strawberries out of a big basket of rather rotten ones. Perhaps this had something to do with Mr. Walpole's unkind adjectival impeachment. Perhaps also he has not quite understood the conditions in which younger writers choose their mediums.

'The people who used to write about a man's private adventures,' Rebecca West remarks, 'those that go on within his own breast, used always to write verse. But now they are impatient of using metre and rhyme. They like to sport among the subtler rhythms of prose.'

She suggests that this state of affairs may have been produced by the intensive training of the ear that has been carried on during the last century by modern music—the change in our faculties that made us accept Wagner's chords as normal perhaps made us reject the iambic pentameter as commonplace. Be this as it may, the poet has turned to the novel and is altering the standards set when it was used by people with logical minds to tell a story. And readers have no more right, she says, to ask a writer like Sherwood Anderson : 'What happened next ? Isn't it rather pointless the way you've left it ?' than to ask such a question after the last line of the *Ode to a Nightingale*.

'Once the novelist expressed his theme by inventing large groups of people and disposing them with a loose grip here and there over a wide map. . . . Now he is not going to express it only by describing the position of certain objects in time and space in terms acceptable to logic. He is going to express it also by suggestions arising out of the use of images that would not be judged strictly relevant by logic ; and he is going to amplify his suggestions still further by suggestions arising out of the use of rhyme and rhythm in ways which are as entirely beyond the purview of logic, as utterly outside the field of intellect, as music. . . . The reader has not yet learned to extend his tolerance to poets who no longer find it necessary to employ the forms of verse, but are able to express their synthesis in modern enfranchised prose.'

But wait ! We have not only poets (old style) masquerading as novelists and short story-writers (new style). We have also novelists (old style) disguised as biographers and even as historians and writers on technical subjects (new style). No wonder the old-fashioned reader is bewildered at this literary carnival !

The imagery of H. E. Baines and A. E. Coppard puts them among the poet-novelists. So does the word-music of some of the Irish writers. One thinks too of the slight volumes of David Garnett and their skilful effect of fantasy. Less exquisite than these and lacking in compression, but from sheer force of emotion belonging also to the realm of poetry, are the works of an older hand—D. H. Lawrence. The list might be extended . . .

Indeed, it is not to be wondered at that the honest fiction-mongers, taking fright at this winged company trespassing in their realm, retreated to new ground. How fertile this ground has turned out you can sample by reading such biographies as E. F. Benson's *Drake* and *Alcibiades*, such histories as Lytton Strachey's *Elizabeth and Essex*, and such scientific essays as Julian Huxley's. Here you have the creative artist turning his light on proved fact. The result is more thrilling than any fictitious narrative. If you prefer to catch the biographer in an irresponsible mood, there is Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*. Or again, the book that reads like a biography although the subject may be an invented character—I am thinking of Willa Cather's lovable portrait of Father Latour in *Death comes to the Archbishop*.

A few worthy prose-writers were left behind in the retreat. Mr. Aldous Huxley, for instance. Although not a writer of genius he is a clever writer—which is just as entertaining. But his books are never as good as one hopes they are going to be because of his unfortunate choice of medium. Neither prose-poet nor old-fashioned novelist, he flounders uncomfortably within the confines of fiction. Twice he has tried to escape—first in his very readable travel book, *Jesting Pilate*; and then in a series of dry essays entitled *Proper Studies*. These proper studies must have been discouraging, for in *Point Counter Point* he has gone back to the novel again. Next time I hope he will try biography.

There is a danger of the poem cast in the mould of fiction becoming too mannered. Poetry, even prose poetry, belongs to a fairly primitive society. To-day we are civilised—if self-consciousness is any indication of a civilised state. And self-conscious poetic writing, however exquisite, sounds precious and artificial when the bloom of novelty has worn off. We long for something less 'synthetic'—something simple and true.

Now biography is a good beefy substance for a writer to get his teeth into these disillusioned days. To begin with, he is supplied with lots of material. He is saved from the distressing lack of theme that afflicted the Articole in M. André Maurois's amusing little satire (*The Island of the Articole*, translated by David Garnett). And—having so much material to work on—the difficulty of style solves itself. Given plenty to say, you do not say it in an artificial or stilted manner. Further, the biographer has opportunities of exercising the psychological insight and the awareness of period and local background which are among the characteristics

of the best writers of the age. I believe the former to be one of the reasons why the novelist has taken to biography. Psychological insight has much more fun with a real person than with an imaginary one. The biographer of to-day is not allowed to be dull. He has to go through the documents bearing on his subject just as assiduously as did his old-fashioned prototype. In fact he has to go through them even more assiduously and to be a great deal more accurate in the conclusions he draws from the conflicting evidence. Our modern passion for ferreting out the truth about people and things is scientific in spirit. We have all the curiosity (I use the word in the French sense) that will only be content with the truth and nothing but the truth. But the artist in biography does not merely tabulate his facts. He gives us the very quintessence of his study. The historian, of course, is brother in art to the biographer. And the scientific writer (if he is also an artist) is a near relation. The blending of literal and aesthetic truth is a new adventure.

I have scarcely begun to fill in this rapid sketch of contemporary literature. The name of James Joyce, to mention one omission, cannot be shrugged at But I hope I have said enough to suggest that there are living movements on foot with scope for their development in the future.

I doubt if the twentieth century will be remembered by a *Forsyte Saga*, however carefully wrought, solidly conceived and patiently elaborated. The 'traditional' novel has been done—consummately and inimitably—by the great Victorians. It belongs to them. It was something leisureed and substantial, all of a piece with their life and environment. The spirit of our age is different and seeks other forms of expression. What particular form posterity will honour, time alone can show. Our claim to immortality is still on the knees of the gods.

IDA FINLAY.

THE CONFESSOR.

BY ALICE GALIMBERTI

(Translated by M. CIMINO-KING.)

From the *Nuova Antologia* of June 16, 1925.

'So you intend to separate ?'

'You see . . .' answered the lady, and a slight blush suffused her face. She was sad, in mourning ; a refined person, evidently unaccustomed to the round of offices, almost ashamed of uncovering her intimate soul to a stranger. Even the name of the eminent lawyer whom she had been advised to consult as the most suitable for her case on account of his experience, as well as his largeness of heart, increased her shyness.

'Allow me to speak to you more openly,' she continued, hesitatingly. 'In this way, perhaps I can explain myself better. You see, we had a child . . .'

Again she stopped suddenly. It was evident that tears were choking her and that she wanted to avoid breaking down before her legal adviser.

'And you have lost him ?' he asked, unwittingly lowering his voice.

'Yes, and with him, poor little angel, we have lost everything. We were so happy together ! Our home was a paradise ! Ever since then my husband has changed, he has no mercy, he cannot bear the sight of me.'

'But how so ?'

'Yes, he accuses me of being the cause of it all, of lack of foresight, vigilance . . .'

Again her voice trembled. Remorse ? Indignation caused by being unjustly accused ? But she contained herself, as one who fears to touch on a raw place, and still more to reveal the intensity of its smart.

'You must be lenient,' interposed the lawyer, with great deference. 'We men are impatient, intolerant of pain. In our impetuosity we speak with our lips, sometimes, and not with our hearts. You will see, after the first moment has passed.'

'A whole year has passed,' answered the sorrowing woman,

shaking her head, 'and things are going from bad to worse. We are a living reproach to each other ; we don't understand each other any more. But this can be of little interest to you ; I must not waste your valuable time. If I have intruded on you it is in order to avoid a scandal : not to have the anguish, the shame of a public discussion. . . .'

'These matters are not discussed in public,' replied the lawyer, with an indulgent smile : the smile of the professional towards one who is ignorant of legal procedure, 'or at least not immediately. Before applying to the Court—do you know whether your husband has already applied for a separation ?'

'Not that I know of so far ; but it is a daily threat. And I am alone : the dread of seeing myself dragged into publicity, as you can understand, with all I hold most sacred. . . . And then I thought of you, whom all know to be so good.'

'Our ministry is somewhat of a priestly ministry,' answered the lawyer, kindly, 'and I always advise reconciliation, even when only material interests are at stake : how much more when the matter is one of such delicacy ! . . . But to return to the subject, what does your husband really accuse you of ?'

'Of having been a bad mother.'

'Proofs would be needed. Besides, that cannot be a cause for separation now.'

'No. He wants to bring forward incompatibility of character.'

'Not admissible in Italy. The parties may, in fact, come before a notary, and a deed drawn up by him in such cases is valid, but mutual consent is necessary.'

'If I knew I could escape idle talk . . . rather than bear such a cross . . .'

The lawyer looked at her in silence, searchingly. His large hazel eyes rested on that wan face with almost fatherly concern.

'We all have our crosses, Signora ; and as soon as one is thrown away one finds another, maybe a heavier one. You say you are alone : do you think it will be very joyful for you to be in a deserted house, whilst your home might still be gladdened by new lives ? . . .'

'I won't ! I won't !' she interrupted almost fiercely. 'One child instead of another, instead of *that other one* ! No ! No ! I would seem to be wronging his memory. And then, with his father who no longer loves me . . .'

'And are you indeed sure he can no longer love you ?' continued the man of law. 'You women have so many ways of touching

our hearts ; a moment of softness and of abandon ; even of abnegation. Yes, I mean sacrifice of *amour propre*. You know our old adage : "If you would only be tolerant, who knows ? . . ."

The woman rose to her feet, looked at him intently ; she too this time, searchingly. Maybe that in his gaze, straight and clear, in his high luminous brow, she there read an unknown word, a word of peace and of pardon.

'But what must I do ?' faltered she, at last. She seemed a little frightened bird, seeking refuge under a wing, strong and safe.

'Listen, Signora, and note what I say. Neither your husband nor any colleague of mine who has any respect for himself will commit any odious action for him on his behalf without first warning you or me, if he knows that you have consulted me.'

'I don't think so ; no, absolutely not.'

'So much the better. As soon as you know of any legal steps taken against you, come to me and we shall endeavour to find a solution in the best possible way.'

She stretched out her slim hand, the little hand gloved in black, seeking his with a nervous pressure.

'Thanks, thanks. I trust you with my honour, with my peace of mind. They had already told me a great deal, but I see . . .'

Her words were uttered confusedly, she was attempting in vain to formulate another question which had seemed so simple to her on entering. Could she speak of fees to one who appeared so different from the conception she had formed of a lawyer, so averse to all litigation, so compassionate of human misery ? . . .

'And your fee ?' she murmured timidly.

'There is plenty of time. If you ever need me, I shall always be at your disposal, and meanwhile . . .'

Her voice, soft and low, completed his thought. . . . 'I shall wait and see.' In her eyes which had wept for so long, there appeared, tremulously, a ray of hope.

Two days later in the same office, at the same desk, before the same lawyer, sat a young client, restless and evidently nervous.

'I have come to consult you about a case of separation.'

'If it is about Signora A——,' replied the lawyer immediately, 'I warn you I am not prepared to entertain it.'

'She has forestalled me !' exclaimed the other. A gleam of hatred darted savagely from his eyes.

'That depends,' replied the lawyer promptly. 'The lady has

not entrusted me with any special commission. She came only for my advice.'

'And to defame me,' added the husband contemptuously.

'No, I assure you not!' There was in the voice of the adviser all the warmth of chivalry defending outraged truth.

'I suppose she entered into a thousand details at least . . . the usual accusations ?'

'No !'

'She does so at home, and how often ! and how bitterly ! Of course it is my fault, my imprudence that killed the child. . . .'

He covered his eyes with the palms of his hands. Then the story extracted with difficulty from the shy, tender mother a few days before, burst from him, from the father, in a passionate outpouring.

'He was a rare child, Lawyer, let me tell you. He was not like ordinary children. By the time he was two months old, he knew me. He spoke with his eyes. And before he was a year old, what intelligence ! What incredible little thoughts for his age ! He was my joy. Because I too am a professional man. . . . Not that I would wish to compare myself in the slightest degree with you ; but for that very reason, because I do not enjoy your triumphs, he was everything to me, that little one. When I used to come home . . . Have you a family ?'

'Yes,' replied the other hurriedly and almost guiltily.

'Then you know what it means for one who is tired, perhaps annoyed, perhaps saddened, to hold that little bird snug to one's heart, to hear its twittering, to feel his little warm kisses. And then, suddenly, nothing more, nothing more because of the other's negligence. . . .'

'It is fate,' corrected the lawyer gravely.

'It might have been prevented, it should have been prevented, I tell you. But no, the visits, the stupidities, no timely warning —and then it is I who have kept him too long out of doors ! It is I who let him catch cold ! And always the same complaints, the same reproaches ! A life like this can't go on. I want to end it—I want to end it any way.'

'And if instead you were to try and have a little patience ?' the lawyer interrupted him at this point in his deep voice, with its compelling modulations. An expert scrutiniser of souls, he had let this soul cry out its grief, drown its anger in tears ; and now he approached it tenderly, like a doctor dressing a wound, like a confessor lifting up a fallen spirit.

'I don't know if you are a believer,' he continued ; and his dark eyes beamed with a sudden light, 'but have you ever thought that the soul of your child might suffer from these dissensions ? Have you ever thought of invoking him in your moments of despair, so that he might grant you a little of the power of sympathy, a little pity for one who suffers like yourself—more than yourself perhaps ?'

'Oh ! don't say so, don't say so ! No one can suffer more than I ; I loved him too well, that little one ! And I was fond of her also once upon a time ; very fond, they envied our union ; and now . . .'

Despondency overcame him, again he thrust his head into his hands and broke into sobs ; into those long agonising sobs which seem only to escape from a manly heart near to breaking.

The lawyer was silent, averting his gaze, not to humiliate that moment of weakness ; then, whilst the other man, mortified, sprang to his feet, he touched him lightly on the shoulder, speaking in a low voice : 'Be patient, courageous ! do not ruin your own and another's life. You are both young, you can re-make your nest once more. . . .'

The man turned round slowly, a trace of tears still on his drawn, neurasthenic face, but he made an effort, he bowed to the lawyer, realising his generous disinterestedness.

'I thank you, sir, I thank you for your good words, I thank you for having listened to me. And, I will listen to you ; I will try to forget, to pardon. But I don't know whether I shall succeed ; I promise nothing. Believe me, indeed, to return to that nest and find her, her alone, instead of the little one, is nameless torture.'

The lawyer accompanied him, almost reverent. Absent-mindedly he answered the formal words of his clerk who was asking him if he had any other orders ; and he returned pensively into the large sunlit office to the table where among pamphlets and documents there smiled the portrait of a child.

Then as midday sounded, slowly and thoughtfully he betook himself through the spacious hall, with its picture-lined walls, to his dwelling, which he had never thought of separating from his office.

And a voice overflowing with sweetness called from the next room ; Papa ! Papa ! Two little feet moved hurriedly, two little hands tried to force the door—and the great lawyer, becoming a child again with his small treasure, suddenly appeared to himself selfish, nay guiltily so, in the face of that misery which had left him, and which he could not alleviate.

THE WINGS OF WAR.

II.

THE DAWN PATROL.

WHATEVER else may fade, I at least shall not forget those dawn patrols.

There was a peculiar malignity about their start. Two hours or less after the last bomber had allowed us to drop into our beds, one wretched officer would be forced from his blankets by the thick-skinned duty petty officer (alias the orderly corporal). He would stagger out barefoot into the gloom outside the hut, trying to prop his eyes wide enough open to look at the dark sky. If he judged the weather unfit for flying, he gave orders to be called in another couple of hours and hurried back to his warm bunk. Knowing that his own decision would send him almost at once up into the twilight to make war, his lot was hard. Many a time have I stood drowsily struggling with my conscience and cursing the system that thrust the choice upon one's own shoulders. Provided the sky seemed promising, the next step was to call the C.O. for confirmation, and then came the difficulty of separating three or five angry officers from their bedding.

Once we had dressed and breakfasted, the craving for sleep had begun to grow less. But I will leave generalising and go back to my first flight as the wireless observer.

Even Hasted, my pilot, has not broken the silence at breakfast. All six of us are sullen and peevish. We straggle singly through the half-light from the Mess to the hangars. On the 'drome we find companions in misfortune—the sleepy mechanics and armourers about the three machines. Great spurts of flame shoot from the exhaust pipes as the engines are 'revved up' and tested. Hasted turns into wind, the flames leap forth again with a roar and the shadowy hangars slide away. The rush of air sweeps the last trace of sleep from my eyes, but there is little to see. The water of a canal gleams for an instant beneath us: otherwise we are travelling in a world of darkness lit by our exhausts and pierced by the two pairs of twin jets astern.

As we climb, the dark grows thinner. Up, up, we go : we are coming into our kingdom. We have met the sun. Soon he will be too bright for us to look upon, but now we watch him glowing redly, low down upon the earth. Our wings are catching a red lustre. We are finding the day while the ground is covered with a pall. I discover I am singing : who would not sing ? Now we are mounting through the clouds. Can any of those poor folk down yonder match our magical snow ranges with their purple caverns and their gilded crests ? We follow up the valleys between the slopes and the cliffs. Once a white mist swallows us, and I spy a tiny rainbow. And now we are threading among pinnacles and domes and flying buttresses. We are almost through. 'My God ! a Hun !' I snatch at the Lewis. No, fool, it's only our shadow—we are miles from the lines. That reminds me, though, I must fire a burst or two to seaward to warm the gun. The dark patch of cloud there makes a good target.

I turn and look for my escorts. There they are ; close in and just above to left and right, faithfully following our every slant and turn. The sight of them gives me almost a sentimental feeling. That's Penn with Thwaite to port, and Everard and Sutton on the left. There won't be any need to worry about my tail this trip. I wave to Sutton and get an answering arm ; then I try to semaphore some nonsense, but nearly lose my gauntlet in the slip-stream. My wireless set is well tuned in for once ; maps, pad and pencils are all in place and ready—there will be little for me to do until we reach Ostend.

We have climbed above the last of the clouds and see the sky overhead quite clear and amazingly blue. Queer that the clouds should appear so level from on top, and queerer still that there should be none beyond Nieuport. The land is beginning to feel the dawn. From Holland, a band of light is spreading and pushing back the darkness towards us. The sun will be a nuisance for the next half-hour : it is fully time we turned eastward and faced him.

As we swing round, the four struts on each wing flash golden while the crossed wires between them and every inch of metal-work are pure silver. Even the fabric has gold in its sheen. Above and to the left, the gravity tank is jet black against the sky ; as black as the distant mound of Hasted's head in front. I am still singing as we cross the lines by Nieuport.

That was the start of a typical dawn patrol. (Its correct name

was really the 'early patrol,' for poor visibility might delay the take-off until any time before noon.) No two flights, however, could ever be quite alike. With the variations in cloud and weather conditions, and therefore one's altitude, and the intensity of A.A. fire, each routine patrol had its own character. Then, too, when German aircraft were about, there was often some distinctive incident.

For instance, there was my Perrin's belt affair. (We carried these life-saving belts loosely over our flying-kit in case of a forced landing in the sea. Normally lying flat, they could be inflated by a blow on a small lever which released compressed air from a metal bottle.) The story begins over Blankenbergh where Masters and I had dropped some distance behind the formation. A Fokker dived on our tail from the sun. I caught sight of him in good time and opened fire almost simultaneously with his gun. Then, in my first few rounds, the Lewis jammed. I dipped to grab my stripping-tool, and was suddenly stricken powerless. Neither body nor arms would move. 'Shot in the spine: paralysed,' I thought, and idly watched the tracers spray from the Fokker as it zoomed and dived on us again. Our 'plane flung over and whirled downwards. Masters was obviously hit as well. But, after falling a couple of thousand feet, he levelled out. Hearing my gun stop, he had purposely put the machine into a spin as one way of escape. Then I felt I could use my hands and, groping underneath, discovered that the Perrin's belt had ballooned round me. I slit the thing up with the point of a bullet, and would have been glad to have let the tale end there. Instead, alas, it went the rounds of the Mess.

A month later, again with Masters, I was doing the morning patrol single-handed, or, rather, without an escort—there had been casualties in the squadron. Wireless telegraphy was never my strong point: the friendly old 'spark' set had given place to the new-fangled 'C.W.' (valve) system, and my burdens had increased. Yet, near the Dutch frontier, I actually heard my personal call-sign prefaced with the 'P' of 'Priority' that meant an urgent message. Through the insistent jamming of the Ghent Telefunken, it came broken and faint. A stern of us at that moment were a couple of German monoplanes, but although they were gaining on us, there seemed time. I lay down on the floor of the cockpit with my head against the wireless receiver and scribbled down groups of figures, checking them over as they were repeated.

A glance astern showed the two scouts to be still a little distance off, so, risking no mistakes, I asked for a second repetition and checked my figures once more. But I had cut things fine. My Lewis was needed before I could decode. Luckily there was not much of a fight: the monoplanes had apparently counted on a surprise and, after a few rounds, they turned back and left us in peace. Slowly—the bilingual inter-Allied Code was always a nuisance—I interpreted those all-important groups. Were they a warning of destroyer flotillas, even of fleets, abroad and in action? None of my imaginings matched the completed message: ‘Wind S.E. Wind is rising.’

The Mess found considerably more humour in both these episodes than I. But I wonder whether any of us still see the point of that colossal joke of Broughton’s—how, when the two Fokkers dived converging on him, he jerked round his tail and watched them meet and crash together in flames?

Some amusement lurks yet in many another story that once set us roaring. There was the yarn of those two heroes who, losing themselves far beyond the lines in fog with a useless compass, flew desperately until their petrol gave out and forced them to land. Faithfully they burnt their machine and took cover in a ditch, to hear all night the tramp of feet along a road. At last, weary but still hopeful of escape, they sighted a single peasant at work in a field in the early morning. Creeping up to him, through the mist, they whispered to him for directions and learnt that just three miles distant lay Calais.

And of course, there was that apocryphal tale of the German brigadier and the staff-major who, after a lengthy night, had taken to the air to cool their heads. They—it is an ancient story—landed on the wrong aerodrome, and resplendent in glittering and multi-coloured uniforms, were protestingly led away by British mechanics.

In my own time, someone (I think from No. 333) when testing his Lewis during a flight, forgot that Dunkirk lay underneath. One of his bullets wounded a respectable citizen and he was despatched none too gaily to visit his victim. Outside the hospital, he passed the Mayor of Dunkirk attended by a group of French officers. In the ward, his apologies were received by a happy ‘Ça ne fait rien, M’sieu: j’ai reçu la croix-de-guerre.’

This brings to mind our joy at the beautiful whiskers, the marchings and counter-marchings and the trumpetings of the French general who presented our decorations, but equally clear

is another memory. Rowland, the Canadian then temporarily in command, was standing gloating over his newly-finished machine which men for days had decorated and fitted with gadgets. I forgot the name of the pilot who landed on top of her and smashed her to splinters, but I do not forget that moment of utter silence. Rowland—like Sutton, he stuttered a little at times—looked, moved his lips dumbly and walked away. Somehow, we onlookers saw no humour in that at all.

Along the Belgian coast, in the latter part of 1918, the most important point was Zeebrugge. After the lapse of ten years, the plan of the place as one viewed it day by day for months still remains vividly clear. Beyond was the long line of the canal stretching to Bruges, with nearer at hand the mass of the Solway works, the three merchantmen at the end of the Darse, and the twin submarine shelters. Then came the double lock-gates surrounded over a wide area by the white marks of the shells and bombs that had been rained on them vainly for years. At the entrance to the canal between the blockships a dredger and hopper were usually to be seen at work. I had almost forgotten the railway leading to the Mole, but not the viaduct and its makeshift bridge thrown across the gap blown by submarine C3 in the piles. At the root of the Mole proper lay the *Brussels*—Fryatt's ship—then the concrete U-boat shelter with one corner dinted by a small bomb, and then that most mysterious 'banana' (which after all was only the keel of a capsized dredger). Ahead of the 'banana' were the berths for the destroyers and torpedo-boats with perhaps a submarine or two. These it was our business to count. Finally, across the channel at the tip of the Mole, were the net buoys and barges moored at right angles. On the Mole itself, there was the railway station that housed the seaplanes, some of which might be in evidence; the sheds ('1,' '2' and '3'); the barbed-wire barrier and the shelters and small gun emplacements. Along the narrow end were the dots of guns of the battery that had nearly sunk the *Vindictive*, and lastly, at the tip, came the circle of the lighthouse.

Eight miles eastward from Zeebrugge, was anchored the Dutch guard-vessel marking the outer corner, so to speak, of Dutch territorial waters. Her crew must have led an unpleasant life. Many a man, fresh out from England, had mistaken her nationality and had plagued her with bombs or machine-gun fire. Naturally

she became very touchy about aircraft. Still, when one had business in her locality, it was a little difficult to remember that one's lawful route lay to seaward of her position. Once, however, secure in my virtue, I flew close above her on the correct side, and who more highly indignant than I when her shell-bursts floated round me?

But to return to Zeebrugge and the blockships. These were of course sunk at the mouth of the canal in order to bottle up the submarines in their base at Bruges. In view of German statements since the Armistice, it is perhaps doubtful whether they actually formed much more than a hindrance after the first few days. Small submarines and torpedo-craft, we knew, were able to slip past them at high tide when a channel had been dredged and widened. But, judging from our own observations, we believed that the destroyers and large submarines which had happened to be at Zeebrugge or at sea on St. George's Day were entirely cut off from those in Bruges Docks. At any rate, there must have been good reason for the continual efforts made to raise either the *Intrepid* or the *Iphigenia*. Our reports of such attempts invariably resulted in a bombardment by our monitors, seconded by a raid by No. 333, and in time the attempts ceased.

One unlooked-for effect of the blockships was the gradual silting-up of the canal mouth. This grew very apparent in our successive photographs. Although a dredger was constantly at work, no dredging could have prevented the channel from becoming entirely choked in time had the War lasted many more months. No. 333 had dark—and at that time, wholly delightful—stories of setting their bombs with a long-delay action. Realising that both the salvage operations and the dredging work were only carried on while no British aircraft were in sight, they argued that unexpected underwater explosions at irregular intervals would tend to discourage the divers, for instance. The reports in the Intelligence summary from 'agents' at Zeebrugge seemed to confirm this.

No. 333 had left their mark inside the Mole in the shape of a destroyer that had been sunk by a direct hit. Since then, any torpedo-craft which had steam up when one of our machines arrived, at once steered for open water and chased her stern in figures-of-eight until we left. For the lighter-minded—if Archie was not very close—that was too good a chance to miss. Our planes carried no bombs, of course, but a little loitering did the

patrol no harm and might cause heart-attacks down below. In a way, this was really poetic justice, for the destroyers gave us a deal of trouble. Counting their slim shapes was particularly difficult if the Mole cast a deep shadow. It was for their sake, too, that one memorised columns of letters in the emergency code in case the sight of the flotilla at sea should necessitate an urgent warning to 'all ships' by wireless.

On one morning, the destroyers nearly turned the tables on White and myself, when we were carrying out a single-machine early patrol. I had seen nothing of importance along the coast until, on looking for my sheep at Zeebrugge, I found their berths vacant. We started off in search and discovered them a few miles out to sea performing some complicated manœuvres. They were firing smoke rockets in answer to signal lights from a number of seaplanes flying above them, while, from a flight of two-seater land machines just below our level, came still more signal lights. White must have been as curious as I, for he obeyed my guiding without question. We edged closer and closer in until, from below, we probably appeared to have joined the party. Still no one noticed us, but I could make little of that was happening. Then, when a two-seater fired a series of green lights, my natural caution deserted me and I added another from my Véry pistol. At once the hunt was up. The whole flight turned on us. It was a long chase, but White made good use of the two or three hundred feet of height we had in hand and brought us off untouched.

That trip stands out for another, and vastly different, reason. On landing at Bergues, we turned round to taxi in at the far corner of the aerodrome beyond the hangars of No. 333 squadron. There some crash had apparently just been cleared away. All signs had vanished save one only. More keenly than any memory of broken bodies or torn flesh there strikes home the picture of that unexplained pool of blood lying in the grass under a hot blue sky.

No. 300 was believed to be the one air squadron in France which was not required to use bombs in 1918. Our freedom was chiefly due to the danger of the spotting observer confusing bomb and shell explosions during 'shoots' by the monitors. Personally I was glad we carried none. Bombing seemed to me a crude and blundering way of making war. (Apart from its moral effect, the land round every vital area in the coastal sector bore witness to

its lack of accuracy as a weapon.) Vengeful souls, such as Thwaite, might load their cockpits for each flight with stones, brick-bats and bottles, but only once did I feel the need for such additions.

It was my lot that day to act as one of the escorts to a photography machine. Observers had grown scarce and I had been lent from my own flight for a morning's work. Fatherly old Low—his thirty-five years and bald head made him our Methuselah—was to obtain a photographic map of the dump and aerodrome of Ghistelles, about five miles southward of Ostend. We went by way of Furnes and Dixmude; kept below 18,000 feet by a layer of cloud. I recognised the home of 'Leugi,' the long-range gun which pestered Dunkirk, where twin black threads, the real and the dummy track, entered a wood. It was easy to find with its halo of bomb and shell marks although the actual emplacement of the gun remained the mystery we marvelled at.

Over Ghistelles we sighted our scout escort waiting for us and using the clouds as a screen against Archie. Then began the interminable series of straight flights across the area: up and down, up and down, with the same turn at the end of each. I grew weary of the business in the first few minutes. Low, I remembered, had once in an unguarded moment described photography as 'just hell.' There had been a general laugh at the time, but now Low had all my sympathies. On a reconnaissance patrol, one could make swift dashes in and out of the barrage. Spotting, although it tied one to the district, allowed some freedom of movement and certainly provided some interest as the shells crept nearer the target. But photography held one bound in every way. Speed, altitude and direction must remain constant and, however close the shrapnel and H.E., the photographer must still have a steady platform. He however, had his work. For his escort there was nothing but the continual movement of head and eyes watching for enemy aircraft.

Our scout escort circled over us for an hour or so, and then disappeared. I did not appreciate those clouds just above: they formed too convenient an ambush, and yet I almost began to hope that something might suddenly dive through to relieve my boredom and to silence that incessant snapping of Archie. With the gunners making such good practice on us, what would be our state in another hour? Low's machine was out of sight behind my back. To my left, between the puffs of smoke, I could see the other escort pitching and swaying, with the gunlayer in the

rear cockpit bent almost double. Below there was little to watch except the sparks as our enemies the A.A. batteries spat up at us.

Once, fleecy smoke to the northward showed that some of our own aircraft were busy above Ostend, and once a ragged cluster of daylight bombers—D.H.9's—swept past and beneath us. I turned to watch for the distant cloud with which Bruges would greet them. Compared with their life, our risks were few. Daily at 16,000 feet or less, their squadron went in to drop their bombs on Bruges Docks through the hottest anti-aircraft fire in all France, scarcely ever to return with their full number. That I knew, but my own troubles were far more vital just then.

By that time, the chill had frozen my fingers and feet, and was eating through my helmet. The second hour was nearly up and mind and body had grown numb. A close 'whump' under our wing jolted me against the cockpit and flung me into an icy rage. I would get even with those swine for my two hours of shelling and bitter cold. Carefully, deliberately, I pointed the Lewis and opened fire in short bursts upon the pin-points of flame below. Drum after drum I emptied until only one was left. This I kept for emergencies. Then I steered my pilot over the batteries (escorting must wait!) and one by one let fall the empty trays over the side. My revolver and Véry-light pistol followed. I ripped out my seat and sent that after the spare joy-stick. Nothing else was movable. It was all sheer foolishness of course: there could hardly be one chance in a thousand of my gear scoring a hit, but at any rate it relieved my feelings.

There was one legacy from my piloting days I could well have done without when beyond the lines. That subconscious attention to the beat of the engine probably added an extra strain. Now I caught the sound of spluttering as soon as Pyne. We turned our heads together; he pointed, I nodded, and we headed for home. Nieuport seemed leagues away. The engine vibrations shook the 'plane so badly that Pyne throttled right down and began to glide. That meant either a crash or Germany for us. Then he opened out again. The engine picked up a little, and, still dropping gradually, we struggled on. I had forgotten to look for enemy scouts, had almost forgotten the A.A. fire: all my thoughts were on the lines and the engine. But, as we sank, those shell-bursts thrust even the engine from my mind. From above, below, from all

round, they coughed ; buffeting the machine, tearing the fabric—and making me long for any way of deliverance that might be swift.

They had ceased. We were across the floods with still a few thousand feet to spare. Once on the right side of the lines, the choke cleared from the carburettor—if that had been the trouble—and we climbed again. Pyne felt confidence enough to carry out his long-standing engagement to take me to ‘see the war.’ We went up the British front to within sight of Ypres, saw a row of seven kite-balloons being shot down in flames in succession by a scout of one side or the other, and came back with a lofty contempt for the anti-aircraft in the Salient.

It is curious now to think how remote we seemed at Bergues from the Army in France. British officers one saw only at the Officers’ Clubs or at the clothing store at Calais or Boulogne. The newspapers that the duty destroyer from Dover brought us a day or two old gave us some idea of the general situation, but we viewed it almost as onlookers. Our work lay on the coast. No advances or retreats southward appeared likely to concern us. With our machines, and with the presence of the ships at Dunkirk, we felt permanently secure.

D. P. CAPPER.

(*To be continued.*)

CARDINAL WOLSEY.¹

BY SIR JOHN MARRIOTT.

SOME folk of a superior order hold that centenary celebrations are becoming a trifle tedious. Perhaps. But if ever an historic town was justified in arranging a celebration to commemorate its greatest son, surely it is Ipswich, which is now preparing to honour the memory of Thomas Wolsey, Cardinal-Archbishop, Papal Legate *a latere* and sometime Lord High Chancellor of England. Nor can it, I think, be denied that of all forms of commemoration a stately pageant is in this case the most appropriate. For Wolsey's whole career was eminently dramatic; one might have described it as melodramatic had it not culminated in pure tragedy. Moreover, Wolsey himself delighted in pageantry; he loved the limelight and the centre of the stage, and he would much rather, I am confident, have played the leading part in tragedy than any subordinate part in the happiest of comedies or in drab domestic drama.

I speak confidently on that point; but it is the only one on which I can; for Wolsey remains, despite much laborious research, an enigma; his whole career presents a paradox. He is one of the outstanding figures in all English history; he is better known by sight to-day to the average Englishman, I dare be sworn, than any contemporary statesman. That may be due in part to a commercial advertisement which stares at you from every hoarding. But any schoolboy, taken unawares, could write something about Wolsey; he would at least recall the fact that he was known as the 'boy-bachelor' and that on his death-bed he lamented that he had served his King too well, and his God too ill. There is something significant in this familiarity. Then turn from the test of popular suffrage to the pundits. In Lord Morley's well-known series of *Twelve English Statesmen*, Wolsey is the first subject to be included. All his predecessors were Kings. That also is significant. Bishop Creighton, who did not use words carelessly, says: 'He was probably the greatest political genius whom England ever produced.'

¹ The substance of a lecture delivered at Ipswich on February 25 as an introduction to the Cardinal Wolsey Pageant to be held in Wolsey's native town on June 23-28 of this year.

That is a challenging statement and almost compels the question : ' What then did Wolsey actually do ? ' With what great achievement do we connect his name ? He founded a great Oxford College. True : but Christ Church, though a magnificent foundation, holds a less important place in the evolution of the collegiate system than William of Wykeham's New College in Oxford. And Wykeham, like Wolsey, was Lord High Chancellor, and in some sort a first Minister of the Crown. But what schoolboy (except a Wykehamist) could write three words on Wykeham ?

Apart from Christ Church, what memorial of Wolsey remains ? Hampton Court is superb, but hardly a monument of statesmanship. What more ? Can Wolsey be said to have deflected the whole course of English history as Sir Robert Peel, for good or ill, did ? Did he, like Pym or Walpole, leave a permanent impress on our system of government ? Did he, like Chatham or Cromwell or Pitt, inspire and lead the nation at one of the critical moments of its history ? Can we connect his name with any great constitutional reform as we can those of Grey and Russell and Disraeli ? What solicitude did he, like Wilberforce, Romilly and Shaftesbury, ever show for the social welfare of the people ? Names like those of Clive, Warren Hastings, Durham, Cromer, and Rhodes (to mention at random but a few) are inscribed on the pages of Imperial history. Wolsey's is not. Where then shall we look for the memorial more enduring than brass to perpetuate the fame or record the achievement of Thomas Wolsey ? Every competent critic, even if not prepared to go so far as Bishop Creighton, agrees that Wolsey is entitled to a high place in the history of English statesmanship, while in the mouths of the unlearned his name liveth for evermore.

What is the key to the enigma ? How shall we resolve the apparent paradox ?

The facts of Wolsey's life are sufficiently established. Born between 1471 and 1475 ; not quite 'the butcher's cur' stigmatised by Buckingham, but the son of a substantial citizen of Ipswich, grazier and butcher, churchwarden of St. Nicholas' Church, and possessed of land and tenements in that parish ; educated at Magdalen College, Oxford, elected into a Fellowship on that foundation ; Bursar (a tribute, doubtless, to his remarkable aptitude for business) and Master of the College School ; admitted to Holy Orders, and for a very short time the incumbent of a country living

—work little, one imagines, to his taste ; then, in 1501, chaplain to Deane, Archbishop of Canterbury ; transferred on Deane's death (1503), in the same capacity, to the service of Sir Richard Nanfan, at that time deputy of Calais ; bequeathed by Nanfan, who had a high appreciation of his capacity, to King Henry VII (1507), and at the same time appointed Secretary to Foxe, Bishop of Winchester and the leading Counsellor of the King.

Wolsey had now got his foot on the lowest rung of the political ladder. In 1508 the King sent him on an embassy to James IV of Scotland, and in the same year employed him on a much more delicate mission to the Emperor Maximilian. For Henry VII had lost his Yorkist Queen and at the age of fifty regarded himself as the 'eligible *parti* of Europe' (the phrase is Bishop Stubbs's) ;

he thought (I still quote the Bishop) 'of the queen of Naples as very practicable and at all events worth very minute enquiries as to teeth and stay-laces ; or perhaps Margaret of Austria who could make him arbiter of the Netherlands and possibly of Spain ; or Johanna of Castile if she could be consoled for the death of the Archduke ; or that delightful Duchess of Angoulême, Louise of Savoy, the mother of Francis I and destroyer of the Constable of Bourbon ; or last but not least, Katherine of Aragon his own daughter-in-law, if the pope whose conscience was elastic enough to dispense a marriage with a brother's wife, could so far stretch a point of infallibility as to connive at such a politic enormity.'

It was in quest of the widowed Lady Margaret of Austria that Wolsey was sent off to the Netherlands in 1508. He did not bring back a bride, or the promise of one, for the 'eligible *parti*' ; but, according to Master Cavendish, to whose delightful *Life* we owe all our knowledge of Wolsey's personal career, he carried out his business with such marvellous expedition, that when the King encountered him after his return he reproached him for not having started !

Wolsey's fortune as a courtier was made. The King warmly commended his 'wonderful expedition,' and rewarded him for his pains with the rich Deanery of Lincoln. On the death of Henry VII he passed into the service of his son as almoner : two years later (1511), he was admitted to the Privy Council and for the next eighteen years he virtually shared the throne with Henry VIII. He succeeded Archbishop Warham as Lord Chancellor in 1515 : in the same year Pope Leo X sent him a Cardinal's hat, and three years later appointed him papal legate *a latere*. Preferments and emoluments poured in upon him ; the deaneries of Hereford and

of York ; a canonry of Windsor, the Bishoprics of Tournay, of Lincoln, of Durham, of Winchester and the Archbishopric of York : not all of these, though many of them, he held simultaneously and with fees and presents and pensions, drew an income estimated at £350,000 a year in the money of to-day.

His fall was as rapid as his rise. On his failure to get a divorce from the Pope for his impatient master he was dismissed from all his offices and deprived of all his goods and emoluments (1529) : and though granted a general pardon in February, 1530, he was suddenly arrested on a charge of high treason in November ; but died at Leicester on his way, under arrest, to London on the eve of St. Andrew's Day (November 29).

This brief outline of facts and dates suggests one or two observations. The first is that Wolsey lived at one of the most wonderful moments of world-history, at the turning-point in the history of England.

Twenty years before his birth (1453) England had been finally driven out of France. France entered on her brilliant career as one of the greatest of continental States ; England for the first time for four hundred years was freed from continental entanglements, and became a purely insular state. The year which witnessed the expulsion of the English from France witnessed also the conquest of Constantinople by the Ottoman Turks. No single event in world-history had a greater influence upon the fortunes of England than that.

While Wolsey was at Oxford the great geographical renaissance of the fifteenth century reached its climax. Columbus set out to discover a new route to the Indies while Wolsey was still a Bachelor ; in the year that he was elected to his Fellowship John Cabot sailed from Bristol to plant the English flag on the American continent ; Vasco da Gama reached the Cape of Good Hope the same year. Those three events, so close together as to be practically simultaneous, decided the future of England.

When Wolsey was at the height of his power Martin Luther was nailing his theses to the church porch at Wittenberg (1517). Four years later he was declared a heretic at the Diet of Worms. In the year of Wolsey's fall Solyman the Magnificent, greatest of all the Ottoman Sultans, was knocking at the gate of Vienna. In the same year the Reformation Parliament met at Westminster.

Verily great matters were afoot. And if the days were great

so were the men. Among those who were practically contemporary with Wolsey, some a little older, some a little younger, were Grocyn, Linacre, Colet, Warham, Thomas More, Erasmus, Melanchthon, Luther, Machiavelli, Raphael, Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci, Dürer, Holbein—the list might be indefinitely extended.

Wolsey, then, was born into a world where all things were new: in politics and discovery, in science, religion, art; man was discovering a new earth and a new heaven. That is the true significance of the *Renaissance*. Amid an infinite variety of manifestations there was an extraordinary unity of spirit. It was the age of discovery: not geographical only, though that was significant enough; but intellectual, spiritual, and political. The Renaissance, as John Addington Symonds said, ‘was the liberation of the reason from a dungeon, the double discovery of the outer and the inner world.’

Such was the background of Wolsey’s life. But his special sphere was Politics, and Politics took on a new meaning at this time. For a thousand years Europe had been dominated by the ghost of the Roman Empire. Rome dying bequeathed to the world the idea of unity; and the idea was, in some sort, embodied in the Holy Roman Empire and the Holy Catholic Church. The European polity to-day rests on the principle not of unity, but of diversity—diversity of language, of race, of nationality. By a prolonged process Europe has at last been exhaustively parcelled out among a large number of Nation-States, each within its own borders Sovereign, none superior or inferior, in technical status, to others. The Middle Ages were ignorant of nations. The Papacy they knew; the Empire they had heard of, but where was a France, a Spain, an Italy, a Germany? Insular England, with its wholly precocious political development, was an exception; but it counted little.

Wolsey witnessed the beginning of the change: the disappearance of the ecumenical order of the Middle Ages, the transition to the chaotic nationalism of the modern era. The great nation-states, under strong centralised monarchies, were just coming to the birth. France and Spain were the first to emerge, and, in the persistent rivalry of Bourbon and Hapsburg, we have the key to Wolsey’s policy in foreign affairs.

What was his policy? Does it represent a brilliant and remarkable achievement—a surmounting of difficulties wellnigh insuperable, or relative failure? To that question the answer of the last

generation of historians was unequivocal. Only some half-century ago was this period of history subjected for the first time to scientific historical criticism by Dr. J. S. Brewer, and to Dr. Brewer's conclusions Bishop Creighton gave popular currency. Brewer and Creighton emphasised the view that by his achievement in the sphere of European diplomacy Wolsey's reputation must stand or fall; nor had they any doubt that it would stand. From that view Dr. Pollard, in his recently published biography, dissents. He maintains that Wolsey's foreign policy was less sound than his domestic policy, and even goes so far as to assert that the European position of England was stronger when Wolsey took office than when he left it.

Coming from so distinguished an authority that is a serious indictment, and demands closer investigation.

Let it be frankly admitted that it is not easy to apply an exact measure to the results of diplomacy, particularly in a period when conditions changed so rapidly as they did in the first half of the sixteenth century. There is considerable force, too, in the criticism implied in the remarks which Lord Herbert of Cherbury professes to report as having been made at a meeting of the Council in 1511. The question of peace or war was under discussion, and certain advocates of peace urged their point in these remarkable words:—

'Let us in God's name leave off our attempts against *terra firma*. The natural situation of islands seems not to comport with conquests in that kind. England alone is a just empire, or when we enlarge ourselves let it be in that way we can and to which it seems the eternal providence hath destined us, which is by sea.'

The 'Blue Water' School was not born yesterday. It must, indeed, be remembered that Herbert (1583–1648) wrote his *Life of Henry VIII* in the spacious times of Queen Elizabeth, and, imbued with the spirit of the times, he may well have antedated the sentiments he professes to report. In Wolsey's day, though Spain was winning a mighty Empire in the new world, European diplomacy had not yet felt the repercussion of *Welt-politik*. The vision of statesmen did not extend beyond Europe, indeed beyond Western Europe. The rivalry of Bourbon and Hapsburg seemed to them the pivot on which world-politics turned; and on that pivot Wolsey concentrated his attention. Inevitably. In no sphere of activity was Wolsey ahead of his age. The sagacious statesman seldom is. Sufficient unto him was his own day; he was of his own world worldly.

Looking then on Europe, Wolsey saw a France, with a population of some 14,000,000, recently consolidated under a strong monarchy ; he saw a Spain, also lately unified, with perhaps 8,000,000 people, soon to be combined under the Emperor Charles V with Austria and the Low Countries—drawing great wealth from the cities of the Netherlands, and much bullion from the mines of South America. He saw Italy, still cut up into city-states and petty principalities, prodigal in the production of incomparable works of art, but politically and economically decadent ; he saw in Rome an ambitious Pope anxious to compensate for the loss of spiritual ascendancy by the extension of his temporal dominions.

And where in this new Europe did England stand ? It is essential to an understanding of Wolsey's policy to realise the position. The battle of Bosworth marks almost the nadir of England's fortunes. Politically humiliated (though not ultimately weakened) by the loss of the Norman and Angevin inheritances in France, she had emerged from the chaos of the Wars of the Roses socially distraught and economically anaemic. With a sparse population of some 3,500,000 ; far from wealthy ; with little external trade ; with no standing army, no regular navy and but little merchant shipping, down to the close of the Middle Ages England was literally 'a third-rate isle half lost among her seas' ; *in* Europe, but hardly *of* Europe ; in no sense a possible rival of either of the great continental powers.

Contrast this state of things with that which obtained at the close of the sixteenth century : with the abounding vitality ; the high self-confidence ; the adventurous temper ; the new spirit of political independence characteristic of Elizabethan England. How can we account for the transformation ? It was due, primarily, of course, to the momentous change in our geographical position. England, so long the *Ultima Thule* of the civilised world, had become, thanks to the Ottoman Turks, to Vasco da Gama, to Columbus and Cabot, the literal centre of the universe. That fact is fundamental ; of the other contributory causes I can here mention only one : the high statesmanship of a succession of great sovereigns and great ministers. Among these, three were, in the domain of foreign affairs, pre-eminent : Henry VII, Wolsey, and Queen Elizabeth.

They gauged the situation accurately, and on the results of a careful diagnosis they based a consecutive and consistent policy. England, relatively poor and weak, could not compete for ascendancy with Bourbons or Hapsburgs ; but by adroit diplomacy she

could maintain an equilibrium between them, and prevent the ascendancy of either. For commercial reasons the door into the Low Countries must be kept open ; it was important also to maintain a connection with Venice. For the rest it mattered little to her whether Bourbon or Hapsburg was dominant in Naples or whether Francis or Charles won mercenary victories on the plains of Lombardy.

Henry VII was the founder of Tudor policy. He was not a likeable man but he was a great King. He established his dynasty in the face of pretenders personally contemptible but powerfully backed ; he rescued from extermination English authority in Ireland ; he paved the way for a union with Scotland ; he repressed aristocratic lawlessness ; laid broad and deep the foundations of a commercial policy which brought England both wealth and power, and in diplomacy he beat foxy Ferdinand and mercurial Maximilian at their own game.

In the school of Henry VII Wolsey graduated : he was his pupil and carried on his policy. That policy rested, as we have seen, on the recognition of the idea of a European equilibrium, or to use the traditional though now derided formula on the ' Balance of Power.' Roman Catholic historians are not too favourable to Wolsey, regarding him, quite unfairly, as the author of the schism. But Lingard, perhaps the greatest of them, has a just appreciation of his foreign policy.

' His great object was to preserve the balance of power between the rival houses of France and Austria : and to this we should refer the mutable politics of the English Cabinet, which first deserted Francis to support the cause of Charles, and, when Charles had obtained the ascendancy, abandoned him to repair the broken fortunes of Francis. The consequence was, that as long as Wolsey presided in the Council, the minister was feared and courted by princes and pontiffs, the King held the distinguished station of arbiter of Europe.' ¹

The 'arbiter of Europe.' That was the supreme end of Wolsey's policy : and he achieved it. ' Unaided by fleets or armies,' as Dr. Brewer wrote, ' ill supported by his master and by colleagues of very moderate ability he contrived by his individual energy to raise this country from a third-rate State into the highest circle of European policy.'

With the details of his diplomacy this paper cannot concern

¹ Lingard (1820), iv, 50.

itself : and the details are in truth both intricate and tiresome. A league formed to-day to annihilate Venice : broken up to-morrow because one of the confederates—the King of France—is becoming over strong. The futile descent of an English army on Guienne ; some spectacular victories in Flanders, due to Wolsey's superb organisation and rewarded, appropriately, by the Bishopric of Tournay. A victory against the Scots won on Flodden field—that was important, for it taught the Scottish barons that England's preoccupation in France was not necessarily a golden opportunity for their border raids ; conferences, now with Charles, now with Francis, even more spectacular than the victories—an inclination now to this side, now to that—the details are infinitely tiresome : the broad result, already estimated, is notably important.

Meanwhile, honours and riches descend upon Wolsey in copious showers. The victory of the French King Charles VIII at Marignano (September, 1515) so alarmed the Pope (Leo X) that in order to conciliate the good will of the English King he sent a Cardinal's hat, as we have seen, to Wolsey.

Meanwhile, Ferdinand of Aragon died and his young grandson Charles, soon to be Emperor also, entered on his Spanish inheritance. His first step was to make peace with France.

Three years later Wolsey was successful in bringing about the conclusion of a 'universal peace.' That Treaty (1518) marks perhaps the zenith of Wolsey's success as a diplomatist. To that date belongs the famous description written by Giustiani to the Venetian Senate. Familiar as it is, I cannot forbear to quote it :—

'He rules both the king and the entire kingdom. On my first arrival in England he used to say to me, "His Majesty will do so and so." Subsequently, by degrees, he forgot himself, and commenced saying, "We shall do so and so." At this present he has reached such a pitch that he says, "I shall do so and so." He is about forty-six years old, very handsome, learned, extremely eloquent, of vast ability and indefatigable. He alone transacts the same business as that which occupies all the magistracies, offices, and councils of Venice, both civil and criminal, and all State affairs likewise are managed by him, let their nature be what it may. He is thoughtful, and has the reputation of being extremely just. He favours the people exceedingly, and especially the poor, hearing their suits and seeking to despatch them instantly. He also makes the lawyers plead gratis for all who are poverty-stricken. He is in very great repute, seven times more so than if he were Pope. He has a very fine palace, where one traverses eight rooms before reaching his audience chamber. They are all hung with tapestry which is changed once a week. Wherever he is he always has a sideboard of plate worth 25,000 ducats. His silver is estimated at 150,000 ducats. In his own chamber there is always a cupboard with vessels to the amount

of 30,000 ducats, as is customary with the English nobility. He is supposed to be very rich indeed in money, plate, and household stuff.'

The faithful Cavendish—his secretary—has also given an imposing and meticulous description of the state which Wolsey at this time was accustomed to keep; of the officers of his household, his steward, his treasurer, his controller, his cofferer, his marshals, the 'master cook who went daily in damask, satin, or velvet with a chain of gold about his neck'; the yeomen and the grooms in larder, in scalding-house, in scullery, in buttery, in pantry, in ewery, in wafery, in wardrobe, in laundry, in bakehouse, in wood-yard, and so forth—in all not less than five hundred persons. To the dignity of Cardinal and *Legatus a latere*, Wolsey had now added the office of Chancellor, and Cavendish gives a detailed account of his ecclesiastical activities:

'Now he being in possession of the chancellorship, endowed with the promotion of an Archbishop, and Cardinal *Legate de latere*, thought himself fully furnished with such authorities and dignities, that he was able to surmount Canterbury in all ecclesiastical jurisdictions, having power to convocate Canterbury and other bishops within his precincts, to assemble at his convocation, in any place within this realm where he would assign, taking upon him the correction of all matters in every diocese, having there through all the realm all manner of spiritual ministers, as commissaries, scribes, apparitors, and all other officers to furnish his courts; visited also all spiritual houses, and presented by prevention whom he listed to their benefices. And to the advancing of his *Legatine* honours and jurisdictions, he had masters of his faculties, masters *Ceremoniarum*, and such other like officers to the glorifying of his dignity. Then had he two great crosses of silver, whereof one of them was for his Archbischoprick, and the other for his Legacy, borne always before him whithersoever he went or rode, by two of the most tallest and comeliest priests that he could get within all this realm. And to the increase of his gains he had also the Bishoprick of Durham and the Abbey of St. Albans *in commendam*; howbeit after, when Bishop Fox, of Winchester, died, he surrendered Durham into the king's hands, and in lieu thereof took the Bishoprick of Winchester. Then he held also, as it were, *in ferme*, Bath, Worcester, and Hereford. . . .'

Such was the great Cardinal in the heyday of his power and ostentation.

The last Cardinal to hold the Great Seal, Wolsey was undoubtedly a great Chancellor. And the Chancellor, as Stubbs reminds us, was in those days 'Secretary of State for all departments,' and as nearly a Prime Minister as the minister of a personal sovereign could be.

In the Tudor dictatorship Wolsey was undoubtedly an enthusias-

tic believer : he furthered its establishment by every means in his power ; by his activities in the Star Chamber—the most popular Court of the day ; by extending the jurisdiction of the Chancellor ; by his development of financial resources—outside the control of Parliament. In Parliament as an instrument of Government he had no belief, and under him, as Dr. Pollard truly says, Parliament was ‘reduced to an insignificance unknown since the earliest days of its existence.’ But his rule, if dictatorial, was benevolent. By the machinery of the Star Chamber he regulated prices, controlled trade, especially in food-stuffs, prescribed the clothes and the food of all classes of the people. Three courses at each meal was the limit imposed on ordinary gentlemen ; six were permitted to Lords of Parliament, Lord Mayors and Knights of the Garter, nine to the Cardinal-Archbishop of York. Above all, he maintained order and executed impartial justice. ‘For your realm,’ he wrote to the King in August, 1517—some two years after he had taken office as Chancellor, ‘our Lord be thanked, it never was in such peace nor tranquillity . . . your laws be in every place indifferently ministered without leasing of any sort.’ His boast was justified.

Now this is of the essence of a Dictatorship. It is precisely what Mussolini is doing for Italy to-day. But the acid test of the success of Dictatorship is its duration, or rather its termination. How soon can it be discarded ? How far is it not merely repressive but *educative* ? Is it training the people to whom it dictates for the use of liberties momentarily denied to them ?

To all these questions there came an emphatic answer from the England of the Stuarts. The success of the Puritan Revolution is the vindication of the Tudor dictatorship. To the building up of that dictatorship Wolsey made an important, perhaps an indispensable contribution.

But the dictatorial minister of a dictatorial monarch is in a peculiarly precarious position. Wolsey made many enemies and few friends. His arrogance, his insolence and ostentation alienated the nobles : his indiscriminate charity failed to conciliate the affection of the poor.

His place and power, therefore, depended wholly on the whim of a capricious master. Henry VIII had an immense respect (as well he might have) for the Cardinal’s ability, and, until his fall, never questioned his fidelity and devotion to his person. But in the year 1527 the political atmosphere became suddenly charged with rumour. There was :

'A buzzing of a separation
Betwixt the King and Katherine
. . . Either the Cardinal
Or some about him near, have out of malice
To the good Queen, possessed him with a scruple
That will undo her.'

So the matter is introduced in *Henry VIII*, and Shakspeare (if the authorship be his) kept very close to his authority—the chronicler Hall. What, or who, started this 'buzzing of a separation'? The question has been endlessly discussed; and not even a summary can be attempted here. But as regards Wolsey's connection with the 'King's business' one or two things can be positively stated. He neither suggested the divorce, nor encouraged it; but when he saw that his master was bent on getting it he used every endeavour to procure the divorce by the regular legal and customary process through the Papal Curia. The circumstances of Henry's marriage to Katherine, his brother's widow, placed the Pope in a particularly awkward dilemma. But Wolsey so far prevailed as to procure the appointment of the Commission to himself and Cardinal Campeggio. Then political complications supervened on the theological difficulties. The Pope found himself virtually a prisoner in the hands of the Emperor, Queen Katherine's nephew. The Commission was revoked. Henry at once decided to take the course recommended to him by Wolsey's enemies—to call a Parliament and 'break the bonds of Rome.' That decision sealed Wolsey's fate. He knew it. He knew his master:

'He is sure a prince of a royal courage and hath a princely heart; and rather than he will either miss or want any part of his will or appetite, he will put the loss of one half of his realm in danger. For I assure you I have often kneeled before him in his privy chamber on my knees, the space of an hour or two, to persuade him from his will and appetite: but I could never bring to pass to dissuade him therefrom; therefore, Master Kingston . . . be well advised and assured what matter ye put in his head, for ye shall never put it out again.'

So Wolsey fell.

Why Wolsey should still loom so large in the imagination of men remains something of a mystery. As to his superb intellectual endowments there can be no question; nor as to his strength of his will, which never bent till it was broken. His industry was prodigious and his ambition insatiable. But though he had vision and imagination, their horizon was limited. He envisaged England

as the arbiter of Europe, his master as absolute lord of England and himself as the monitor of his master's will and the inspirer of his policy. Wolsey, however, was never content to be the power behind the throne. He must not only rule but be known to rule, and his love of ostentation would have seemed in any lesser man the essence of vulgarity. But there are not a few instances to prove that a passion for spending and display are not incompatible with high gifts of intellect, especially in those who rise suddenly from obscurity to greatness. Save his Oxford education, Wolsey owed little to fortune ; he was essentially a self-made man.

Except himself, what did he make ? The hitherto accepted view is that by sheer skill in diplomacy Wolsey raised his country to a position it had never before attained in the European polity, and that view, though recently questioned, seems to me substantially sound. For the rest, his tenure of the Chancellorship was unquestionably memorable, and he made an important contribution to the building up of the Tudor Dictatorship, a necessary preliminary, in my judgment, to the building up of a nation fit for the varied tasks which awaited it in the seventeenth century.

Other men in their several generations have rendered similar service to their country. But their names are not had in everlasting remembrances, save by professed students of history or by those who have enjoyed their benefactions. What was there in Wolsey to distinguish him from them ? Why is he still a familiar figure to the 'man in the street' ? Some part of Wolsey's fame must, as already hinted, be attributed to the exceptional importance of the time in which he lived. But that is known only to the specialist. Wolsey's fame owes something to the devotion and skill of his 'gentleman usher,' Master Cavendish, and for the permanent popularity of his *Life* Cavendish owes everything to Shakspeare. Shakspeare, however, would never have drawn that superb full-length portrait of the 'proudest prelate' that ever sat on episcopal throne in England had not his sitter possessed a magnetism and a personality which he could present in drama.

There, I believe, is to be found the secret of Wolsey's enduring fame. The eyes and ears of the crowd are attracted less by achievement than by personality. Wolsey was essentially a great personality, and not only to his contemporaries. In virtue of a quality difficult to define or to analyse, that personality has been transmitted to posterity ; and if, as some hold, transmitted personality be the true test of greatness, Wolsey was among the greatest of England's sons.

LITERARY ACROSTICS.

A LITERARY Acrostic is published every month, and the Editor of THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE offers two prizes to the most successful solvers. The winners will be entitled to choose books to the value of £1 from Mr. Murray's catalogue. If several solvers send solutions of equal merit, the two whose answers are opened first will win the prizes.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 80.

'There's nothing half so sweet in life
As love's —— ——.'

1. 'But ——, proud foe, thy fleet,
With the crews, at England's feet,
And make submission meet
To our King.'
2. 'For men must work, and women must weep,
And the sooner it's ——, the sooner to sleep.'
3. 'And the widows of Ashur are loud in their wail,
And the idols are broke in the temple of Baal;
And the might of the Gentile, —— by the sword,
Hath melted like snow in the glance of the Lord!'
4. 'I'll see if I can get my husband's ring,
Which I did make him swear to keep for ever.'
5. 'Full many a ——, of purest ray serene,
The dark unfathomed caves of ocean bear.'

RULES.¹

1. Only one answer may be sent to each light.
2. Every correct light and upright will score one point.
3. With his answer every solver must send the coupon that is printed on page x of 'Book Notes' in the preliminary pages of this issue; and he must be careful to give also his real name and address.
4. Solvers should not write either the quotations or the references on the same paper as their answers. It is not necessary, or even desirable, to send them at all.
5. Solvers who write a second letter, to correct a previous answer, must send the complete solution as they wish it, and not merely state the desired alteration.
6. Answers to Acrostic No. 80 should be addressed to the Acrostic Editor, THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE 50 Albemarle Street, London, W.1, and must arrive not later than April 22. No answers will be opened before this date.

POEM : Longfellow, *The Village Blacksmith*.

ANSWER TO NO. 79.

1. M	adnes	S
2. I	ndifferen	T
3. G	ladiato	R
4. H	att	O
5. T	arpeia	N
6. Y	oun	G

LIGHTS :

1. Dryden, *Absalom and Achitophel*, part 1.
2. Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, iii, 1.
3. Byron, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, iv, 140.
4. Southey, *God's Judgement on a Wicked Bishop*.
5. Macaulay, *Lays of Ancient Rome. Horatius*, xvi.
6. Wordsworth, *The Prelude*, book 11.

Acrostic No. 78 (' Jessica—Shylock ') : The prizes are won by Mrs. I. Anderson, Manor House, Guernsey, and Mrs. E. M. Hill, 14 Downshire Hill, London, N.W.3. These two solvers will choose books to the value of £1 from Mr. Murray's catalogue.

d on
ust be
n the
them
send
ation.
ditor,
rrive

black-
phel,
nage,
on a
ome.
book

rson,
W.B.
ogue.